Historic Building Recording at Canons Ashby House Northamptonshire October - December 2017

Report No. 18/82

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Project Manager: Anthony Maull
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Undertaken on behalf of the **National Trust**

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS	*OASIS* molanort1-322973	
Project title	Historic Building Recording at Canons Ashby House, Northamptonshire, October – December 2017	
Short description	A comprehensive survey of Canons Ashby House revealed a multi-phased and complicated sequence of development and alteration from the mid 16th to the 19th century. The house originated as a pre mid 16th-century farmhouse which was expanded and modernised by John Dryden in the period 1551-1584, resulting in an H-plan house with tower. This formed the basis for later developments which expanded the structure into a courtyard plan form. Later developments, particularly in *c*1710, altered floor levels, room layout and access, fenestration, and overall aesthetics and decoration.	
Project type	Historic Building Survey	
Previous work	Archaeological watching brief	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type and period	Pre mid 16th-century house with mid-late 16th and 17th-century extensions, and with 18th and 19th-century remodelling and alterations	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	Canons Ashby House, Canons Ashby	
NGR	SP 57720 50645	
Area	*c*840 sq m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	MOLA Northampton	
Project brief originator	Rachael Hall - National Trust	
Project Design originator	MOLA Northampton	
Director/Supervisor	Amir Bassir	
Project Manager	Anthony Maull	
Sponsor or funding body	National Trust	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	October 2017	
End date	December 2017	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content
Physical	Canons Ashby House	NA
Digital		Digital Photographs, Photogrammatic models, 3D laser scan point cloud
Paper		Historic Building Report, Notes, Sketch Drawings, Note pads, Measured drawings on permatrace
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Title	Historic Building Recording at Canons Ashby House, Northamptonshire, October – December 2017	
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Canons Ashby House, Northamptonshire
October – December 2017

Summary

A comprehensive programme of historic building recording was undertaken at Canons Ashby House, Northamptonshire between October and December 2017. This work sought not only to provide a detailed record of the house but also to examine the sequences of development of alteration which were undertaken in the nearly five hundred year period since its construction. Recording comprised a complete photographic survey of the external elevations and all accessible rooms and roof spaces, and a drawn record which included doors and windows, timber-framing, roof trusses, and sections, elevations and plans. A laser survey was also carried out which allowed the house to be mapped to a high level of detail, and an aerial drone survey provided high level photographs from which a full photogrammatic model of the house exterior was produced.

The house comprises four interconnected ranges enclosing a central courtyard and stands adjacent to the former Banbury Lane drovers' route. Adjacent to the house are formal gardens and pasture fields leading to a small lake. The remains of a former medieval priory are located a short distance away from the house and provided some of the building material for its construction.

The present house developed around a Farmhouse which came into the possession of John Dryden in the mid 16th century and which forms the north-western corner of the building and possibly parts of the east range. This survey suggests that the Farmhouse comprised a two-part structure with a storied bay at the north containing parlours, and a possible hall to the south. The extent of alterations and re-use of material has made it difficult to ascertain how much of the current layout and fabric is original to the Farmhouse and how much added by John when he re-decorated and modernised it.

Separately, whether contemporary or as a later phase of building, John Dryden constructed a Tower House which forms the south-west part of the present house. The Tower contained domestic rooms while the adjoining block contained two large rooms at ground and first floor levels, these likely serving as entertaining rooms and the main chamber. Before his death in 1584 John extended the farmhouse eastward by one bay, and connected the farmhouse to the tower house with a two storey range containing a Hall at ground level with a Long Gallery over. This development produced a symmetrical H-plan and the arrangement was unified behind a brick facade, an early use of this material in Northamptonshire.

The house was further extended in the late 16th or early 17th century to form the current courtyard plan. The new ranges had prominent rooms with decorative ceilings including an unusual double-arched ceiling in the north range. The rooms in the south range were accessed by a substantial stair and an existing stair in the former Farmhouse was altered and enlarged. The Kitchen was significantly enlarged and the floor lowered, and the former first floor level was reduced to a corridor and two rooms, becoming disconnected from the main floor levels. The present Winter Parlour likely was created at this time, further reducing the former first floor level. The partitioning of the Long Gallery may have been carried out during this time. In around 1630 the former barrel vault ceiling was replaced by the present Jacobean-style quadripartite strapwork one.

The early 18th century saw the most prolific alterations to the house, during which Edward Dryden completely re-faced the south elevation to create a roughly symmetrical fashionable facade with orderly rows of sash windows and at the same time had a formal garden created to provide a suitable setting for the house. Edward also balanced the east range by adding one or perhaps both canted bays, and internally removed the double arched ceiling and altered the floor levels in order to create a panelled room served by a newly installed chimney with a bake house and laundry at ground floor. The already symmetrical west range was made more orderly by the blocking and modification of existing windows and the addition of sashes at ground level, as well as by blocking the former off-centre door and the creation of a large doorway with baroque surround. Internally Edward re-decorated several of the rooms, in some emphasising

the historic characteristics while in others providing fashionable panelling and fireplaces. The floor level across the south range was lowered by 0.3m to heighten the ground floor rooms, and the doors at both ground and first floor levels were moved in order to provide continuous enfilade across the south range. In the Hall a new fashionable chequerboard stone floor was added, supported on new brick vaults in the cellar.

Edward died in 1716 and the rest of the 18th and 19th century saw few modifications of note except for the addition of a Rococo ceiling in the Spenser's Room in the mid 18th century. Sir Henry Dryden 'The Antiquary', undertook some minor alterations to the house layout and had two of the sash windows removed and several stone mullion windows reinstated, but otherwise the house remained unchanged and un-modernised until the early to mid twentieth century when water and electricity were provided.

From 1962 the house was let out and some restoration work was undertaken but by 1980 the structural problems were too great and required significant intervention to address. Following a grant from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, Canons Ashby passed to the National Trust, and in 1981, with help from the Historic Buildings Council, the Department of the Environment, and the Landmark Trust, as well as a public appeal, a major programme of restoration, conservation and repair was implemented.

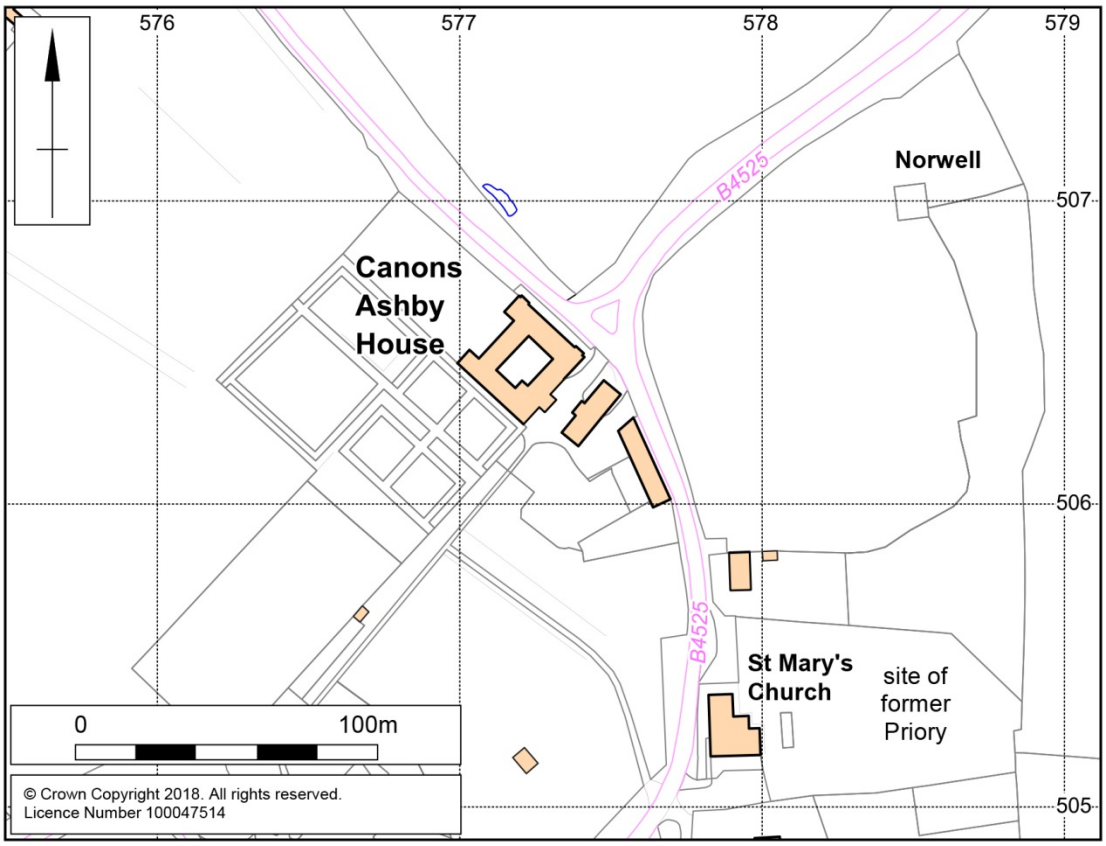
The development of the house reflects the wider changes in social and building history and architectural fashion, progressing from a post-medieval and somewhat vernacular form to the more orderly and symmetrical layout of the English Renaissance. Later, the house was re-styled in the fashion of the Restoration and Baroque, and some minor Rococo influence was exerted in the mid 18th century. The building is an important benchmark structure for the study of regional building practices and provides some unusual roof structures which while broadly conforming to the regional tradition of heavy principal rafters show a great degree of experimentation. Likewise the flooring, particularly in the south range, demonstrates some unusual construction methods and the well-built floor in the Dining Room shows considerable craftsmanship.

1 INTRODUCTION

MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) was instructed by National Trust to undertake an in-depth historic building recording exercise of the mid 16th-century Grade I Listed Canons Ashby House, Northamptonshire (Listing Ref 1075304) (Figs 1 and 2). The programme of works was described as a comprehensive study of the house, detailing its development through examination of the fabric and analysing the phasing and alterations, and comparing these to previous interpretations and historic sources. The work would also provide an understanding of the significance of the building in relation to regional and national context and provide opportunities for volunteer participation in the survey and research (NT 2017).

The recording and analysis was carried out in-line with Historic England Level 4 historic building recording as set out in the Historic England document *Understanding Historic Buildings, A Guide to Good Practice* (HE 2016a). All works were undertaken in accordance with current guidelines (CIfA 2014a and 2014b) and Historic England (MORPHE) (HE 2015). The survey examined all accessible areas including roof spaces as far as safely possible and comprised photographic and drawn recording as well aerial photography and 3D laser survey to map the structure.

Whilst this survey comprises the first large scale examination of the house, a smaller, limited survey has previously been carried out by the Royal Commission for Historic Monuments (Heward and Taylor 1996).



Site location Fig 1

Aerial view of the house, showing the landscape and setting, looking east Fig 2

2 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

Level 4 recording is considered the highest level of recording as defined by Historic England guidance and the objective of such a record is to provide a comprehensive analytical record appropriate for buildings of special importance. The record should draw on a full range of sources of information about the building and discuss its significance in terms of architectural, social, regional or economic history (HE 2016a, 5.4).

Specific project aims included:

- Level 4 historic building record and interpretative report;
- To provide a detailed understanding and chronological narrative of the developmental history of the house;
- To understand the relationship of Canons Ashby House with the Gardens, Parkland and Estate;
- To provide a sound, evidenced and accessible basis for future understanding and conservation of the house;
- To detail any gaps in understanding and knowledge, outlining potential key areas for future research;
- To provide opportunities for volunteer participation and learning.

A number of specific questions about the house were put forward by the house volunteers; these will be addressed in a separate document.

Recording was carried out between 2nd October and 8th December 2017. A systematic approach to recording was put in place in order to enable as detailed a record as possible in the allocated time frame.

The recording methodology comprised several distinct elements:

A comprehensive photographic survey, both external and internal comprising general and detailed views of the house, rooms and roof spaces, fixtures and fittings and any elements of historic or architectural detail. Photography was carried out using a Nikon D7200 equipped with Sigma 10-20mm, Nikon 18-105mm, Nikon 35mm, and Nikon 70-300mm lenses. Supplementary photographs were taken using a Panasonic Lumix DMC-FZ1000. Photographs were taken in RAW and Fine JPEG and scales of an appropriate size were included in photographs where appropriate and where possible. Lighting was provided by natural lighting, flash, or large diffuse lamps as access allowed. Where possible, furniture was moved aside to allow for clearer views of the rooms.

The house is positioned diagonally to the north and south, therefore for ease of description this report describes the house with the north-east facing elevation rotated to the north, the south-west facing elevation rotated to the south and so on. This site north is also used for photograph descriptions and lines of sight.

A drawn record comprising measured drawings and measured sketches. This included large-scale plans and cross sections of rooms, roofing members, timberwork, window and door surrounds and details of fixtures and fittings. A full measured sectional elevation was produced of one range, spanning from ground level to the roof. All of the available roof spaces were entered and representative examples of all distinct roofing forms were drawn. Likewise, where accessible, representative examples of windows were recorded across all floors. The survey methodology and drawing conventions were carried out in line with the Historic England document *Drawing for Understanding, Creating Interpretive Drawings of Historic Buildings* (HE 2016b). Measurements were taken using hand tapes and laser measure and where possible a self-levelling cross line laser level was used.

Existing architectural survey drawings including plans, sections and elevations were annotated and amended to reflect features of archaeological interest and written notes were made of spaces and features throughout the house.

The project also included the recording of ritual markings, graffiti and masons' marks throughout the house, both on the external elevations and throughout the rooms. Individual or groups of graffiti and markings were recorded on pro-forma sheets, photographed and sketched. Tapered candle burns were noted in several places in the house and were photographed either individually or as groups and notes were made of their dimensions and location.

Particular areas of focus for the investigation were as follows:

- To examine the earliest form and fabric of the building in order to determine the extent and form of Wylkyns Farm, the forerunner around which the house developed and which to some degree would come to influence and restrict the later plan form.
- The relationship between the Winter Parlour and Sitting Room and the unusual floor and ceiling levels noted in this area as well as in the immediate vicinity including the disjointed arrangement of stair and cupboards.
- To examine the timber framed painted wall in the Spenser's Room and the overlying stone gable in order to determine their phasing and relationship to the Wylkyns Farm range and the south range.
- To understand the development of the house in and around the Kitchen area as well as the relationship of this room to the Hall and western range.
- To record and understand the development of routes of access through the ranges in order to understand how the current stairs relate to expansions of the house and changes in floor levels related to these alterations.
- To record the roof structures and framing methods employed throughout the various areas of the house in order to relate these with phases of construction and alteration.

The room names used in this report are primarily those in current use, though in some instances rooms are referred to by their historical functions, i.e. Water House, Brewhouse, Laundry. The cellar rooms have been numbered since there is no set nomenclature for them, though the former function of some of these rooms is known.

South and West elevations survey

The south-west and north-west façades of the house were surveyed using photogrammetry techniques, and the resulting data was used to produce 2D line drawn elevations. A site control network was established using a Leica Reflectorless Total Station and tied into National Grid OS coordinates using Leica GNSS equipment. Temporary photoscan targets were fixed to the two façades and located onto 3D Ordnance Survey coordinates by total station. Approximately 500 photographs were then taken around the external façades of the house, with particular attention to the two façades to be recorded. This was to try and ensure as much data as possible was captured to allow rooflines and chimneys behind the elevations to be recorded and drawn.

The coordinated targets and photographs were processed using AgiSoft Photoscan to create a 3D pointcloud of the building, located on 3D OS coordinates. The pointcloud was then exported into AutoCAD to create 2D line drawn elevations of the two façades. Originally, it had been envisaged that a textured model would be created in AgiSoft Photoscan, and orthophotos exported for use in AutoCAD to create the elevations. However, because of obstructions such as trees and hedges, it became clear that it

would be better to make use of the pointcloud directly as obstructions could be more easily removed.

Aerial survey

An aerial photographic survey was carried out using a DJI Phantom 3 Professional quadcopter in accordance with the MOLA Operations Manual (MOLA 2017). The Phantom 3 Pro was equipped with a 12 megapixel camera able to take 4k video. The aircraft was flown within visual line of sight and used to take a series of overlapping pictures of the primary elevations, courtyard elevations and roofs. The photographs were processed using Agisoft Photoscan to produce a 3D model of the building's exterior. This was accurately scaled using known measurements of building features. High resolution photo orthomosaics of each external elevation were also generated from the 3D model using Agisoft Photoscan.

3D Laser survey

The exterior and interior of the house were mapped using a Geoslam Zeb-Revo hand-held laser scanner which enabled rapid data capture of all available spaces including parts of the attics. It was not possible to capture the house in a single scan and spherical targets were placed throughout the house in order to tie the multiple scans into a single point cloud. The scan had an accuracy of *c*15mm and the resultant point cloud comprised over 500 million points. This survey enabled longitudinal, transverse and horizontal sections to be placed throughout the house, allowing the spatial relationships of the rooms to be examined in greater detail.

Photogrammetry

Several orthomosaic models were produced of minor features of the house, including the entrance to the Hall, the painted wall in the Spenser's Room, and the external alcove of the north elevation. The photographs were taken using a Panasonic Lumix FZ1000 and processed in Agisoft Photoscan. Due to the difficulties in accessing the enclosed alcove behind the panelling of the Winter Parlour a rough model was produced of this feature to allow it to be examined without the need to repeatedly enter the space.

3 LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY

Canons Ashby occupies a secluded location along the former drovers' road Banbury Lane (B4525) which connects Northampton and Banbury, with minor roads to Eydon and Preston Capes also converging at the house (Fig 1). The surrounding area comprises arable and pastoral fields with scattered farms along the roads. The site of the formerly extensive medieval priory is located to the south-east of the house with St Mary's Church and the nearby Norwell being its only standing remains. The house is contained within a walled enclosure which separates the building and garden from the adjacent park. To the east of the house are stables which were remodelled in the mid 19th century, and to west is an 18th century Deer Larder which was enlarged in around 1867 to serve as a gamekeeper's cottage.

The house stands at *c*160m aOD and the topography slopes down to the south-west where lakes and fishponds were created adjacent to the park. A flat topped motte standing to the west of the house has been suggested as being the precursor of the Cope manor house (Steane, 1974 121).

The underlying stratigraphy at Canons Ashby has been mapped as comprising sandstone, limestone and ironstone of the Northampton Sand Formation, and mudstone of the Whitby Mudstone Formation (BGS 2018). These are overlain by Quaternary fluvioglacial sedimentary deposits.

4 HISTORIC BACKGROUND

> Ashby-Canons is bounded on the east by Maidford, by Preston on the north, Eydon west, and Moreton Pinkney on the south. It hath its name of Canons from the prior of Black Canons, that were seated in this Lordship. The utmost extent of the parish is computed to be two miles. The number of houses including Sir John Dryden's seat is six...The seat of Sir John Dryden is neither large nor small. It is tolerably well built, according to the mode of those times, wherein they rather consulted strength than regularity. The late repairs and embellishments are owing to the ruins of one, much more famous both for bulk and antiquity, the mansion house of the Copes; which is said to have been very large, and to have had the lower storey camerated with brick-work and supported by columns of stone, wrought after the Gothic manner. It was built out of the ruins of the monastery. In Sir John Dryden's house is nothing very remarkable, except one room of thirty foot long by twenty foot wide, which is reported to be entirely floored and wainscoted with timber of one single oak, which grew in this Lordship (Bridges 1791, 223).

The priory was founded in the 12th century, when Stephen de Leye granted the churches at Ashby and Podington four virgates of land, a park, mill, and 26 acres of meadow to the Black Canons of the Order of St Augustine (Whelan 1874). The priory expanded in the subsequent years, coming into possession of land at Eydon, Culworth, Helmdon and other localities in the district. The village numbered 41 houses in 1343 but the population was reduced as a result of the Black Death and by the enclosing of around 100 acres by the priory, during which twenty-four people were evicted, leaving only nine tenants in 1535 (NT 1998). In 1489 there were 100 acres of enclosure and the whole township was enclosed by 1547 (Hall 1995, 175). By the 18th century the village was described by Bridges as containing six houses. It remained at this small size up to the 19th century, with six houses and 40 inhabitants in 1801, six houses and 41 inhabitants in 1811, and five houses and 32 inhabitants (Baker 1836, 14). In the censuses of 1851 and 1871 the number of inhabitants was recorded as 68 (Whelan 1874, 513).

The Dissolution of the monasteries released vast numbers of potential building sites and many houses of the 16th and 17th centuries were built on such sites and often,

such as at Lacock, incorporated parts of pre-existing monastic structures. Such sites, as has been demonstrated at Canons Ashby, provided a ready source of raw materials to be re-used in new buildings. Another consequence of the Dissolution was that it made available, on a wider domestic level, the craftsmen and their skills that were previously kept occupied on ecclesiastical buildings.

Following the Dissolution, the priory and its estate were granted to Sir Francis Bryan. The site of the monastery was “converted into a residence by Sir John Cope, but was not adopted by his successors, and before the close of the 17th century it was divided into two farmhouses, occupied by the tenants, and so continued after the purchase by the Drydens till it was taken down in 1710” (Baker 1836, 13). John Cope converted part of the monastic buildings into a house known as Cope Ashby which survived until the mid 17th century and material from that house may have been utilised in Canons Ashby house.

As evidenced at Canons Ashby the process of enclosure in Northamptonshire was underway by the 15th century and was accompanied by the conversion of tillage into pasture and an increase in sheep-farming on a large scale. Sheep farming presented many advantages to tilling including significantly lower labour cost, a rise in the price of wool up to 1550, and a growing market for meat in nearby London. The opportunities presented by such an environment persuaded nobility and gentry to invest in land and buildings and the 16th and 17th century; a wealth of great Tudor houses being built with the profits of animal husbandry. "The acquisition of a great estate with a sufficiently strong economic base founded on large-scale sheep and cattle farming led naturally to the next step in lordly advancement, the building of an elaborate and fashionably up to date home" (Steane 1974, 199).

In a wider context the Tudor period was one of stability and the Tudor state was “buttressed by the creation of new administrative posts within the government and in the shires, and many of these posts were deliberately filled by new men untainted by the political and dynastic rivalries of the old established families... Such men were handsomely rewarded for their allegiance and generated their own demand to be suitably housed in accordance with the proper status that their new found wealth and power required" (Airs 2007, 14). From the Elizabethan period the impetus and driving force behind architectural change and fashion passed from the Crown to the courtiers and gentry for whom the house was not merely a place to live but a status symbol and object of social rivalry, and a means of presenting wealth, modernity and learning. These new fashions were adapted and diluted with the traditional domestic building form by an increasing number of landowners at the gentry, tradesmen and yeomen levels who sought to emulate the houses of their social superiors, and filtered eventually to the smaller houses of husbandmen and labourers, forming the characteristic architecture style of the rural landscape.

The estate at Canons Ashby along with Wylkyns Farm, the farmhouse of Robert Wylkyns, the village carpenter, came into the possession of John Dryden, the eldest son of David Dryden of Cumberland. It is held that he gained this estate in 1551 via his marriage to Elizabeth, daughter of John Cope, however Baker has suggested that he may have inherited the estate by descent.

> John Dryden, gent. was in possession of an estate here, and a mansion house called "Wilkin's Farm". A close named Nicol's-yard is expressly called "parcel of his inheritance", which would imply that he derived it by descent, though in the family pedigree his father and grandfather are both described of the county of Cumberland. Bridges, or rather his editor Whalley, has presumed that the Dryden property in Ashby was a portion of the Cope estate, and devolved upon Mr Dryden in right of Elizabeth his wife (Baker 1836, 5).

An indenture of 1573 records that John Dryden acquired the site of the late monastery of Canons Ashby from Edward Cope, and Edward retained “all such Glasse, ceilings, table, forms and tressells as were and doe remayne within the Mansion House of the said scyte of the said Monastery and the windows of the same” (NT 1998). John Dryden was able to lay pipes from the Norwell to his own mansion house, lately Wylkyns Farmhouse.

The development of Canons Ashby House will be addressed in detail in the following chapters and discussion (Section 14). This survey has suggested that Wylkyns Farmhouse may have occupied the north-west corner of the building, now the service range comprising the Kitchen and Winter Parlour at ground floor level. The east range which has traditionally been attributed as the farmhouse may instead have originated as a separate building associated with the farmhouse. While the farmhouse appears to have been masonry built with timber-framed internal divisions, the east range was likely to have been a thatched, cob-built structure with raised cruck roof. It is further suggested by this survey that the east range may have extended further south and north than its current limits and was reduced to accommodate the later north and south ranges.

John Dryden began development of the site by constructing a tower house separate from the existing buildings and subsequently joined this to the farmhouse with the two-storey Hall and Long Gallery. The farmhouse was modernised and renewed internally with a painted decorative scheme and the addition or enlargement of the stair. It is unclear as to what extent the internal layout and room division was altered during this period. The construction of the west range required the re-roofing of the farmhouse which was also extended eastward by one bay. The resultant building presented an H-plan form with projecting gables to the west and presenting the impression of a traditional medieval hall plan. There is some evidence to suggest that the south range may have been extended eastward at this time, creating the block now occupied by the Drawing Room.

Expansion of the house was continued by John Dryden’s son, Erasmus who inherited the house in 1584 upon the death of his father. He instigated the eastward expansion of the house, creating two flanking ranges that enveloped the existing eastern building. It is likely that he had intended to re-build the eastern range but perhaps due to a lack of funds instead replaced the cob walls with stone, retaining the roof structure. This method of renewing existing houses appears to have been commonplace in the county during the 16th to 18th centuries. In the north range, at second floor level, Erasmus created an elaborate double-arched ceiling, with a simpler barrel vault in the opposite side of the house in the south range. The construction of the Great Stair which required the removal of several domestic rooms in the tower is attributed to either Erasmus or his son John who commissioned the new Drawing Room ceiling in celebration of his marriage.

Sir John Dryden, 2nd Bt was a Puritan and MP for Northamptonshire who lent support to the Parliamentary cause during the English Civil War (1642-51). Hostilities largely bypassed Canons Ashby except for a minor skirmish which resulted in the burning of the church tower but left the house unharmed. Sir John’s son, Robert, succeeded to the property in 1658, and while his impact on Canons Ashby house appears to have been minimal, he demolished the old Cope mansion, providing a ready source of building material for later work (this contradicting Baker's date of 1710).

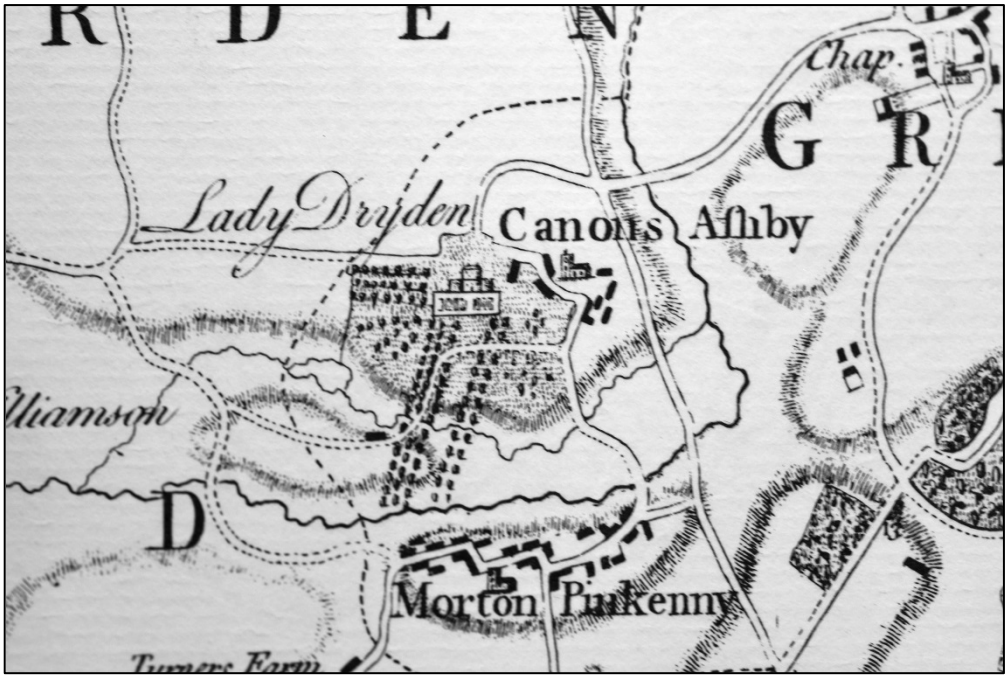
Edward Dryden inherited the property in 1708 and began a major phase of alteration which sought to provide fashionable baroque symmetry to the external facades, whilst also establishing and promoting the heritage of the house and family. The south range was completely refaced and provided with sash windows while the west face was unified under a rendered surface which covered any windows that did not allow

symmetry. The old doorway was hidden and a new, much larger entrance was placed centrally to the building. Several of the rooms were enlarged and provided with new panelling and fireplaces while, in the Hall, Edward added arms and armour in a mock medieval style and placed heraldic panels in the Drawing Room bearing the motto 'Antient as the Druids'.

Edward died in 1717, and the house remained largely unchanged, with little modernisation except for the addition of a Rococo style papier maché ceiling in Spenser's Room. In the early 19th century the Reverend Henry Dryden, in discussion with a local builder, contemplated the complete remodelling of the eastern range in the Gothic Revival style as well as expanding the east and south ranges into the courtyard. This work was not carried out due to lack of finances though a letter to the builder, William Litchfield of Daventry, suggests that some preparatory work may have been undertaken.

Sir Henry Dryden, the Antiquary, succeeded to the property in 1837. His impact on the property appears to have generally been isolated to repair work and he documented repairs undertaken of window frames, chimneys and drainage. A new cooking range was added in the Kitchen and he reinstated the mullion windows to the north-east Sitting Room, blocking up two of the sash windows. During this period the primary approach which had been from the west via Green Court, was shifted to the east through the Pebbled Court.

The house was modernised in the 1940s when electricity and plumbing were installed but it had begun to deteriorate by this time and was in need of major structural intervention to address subsidence and rotting of major framing members. A comprehensive three year restoration programme was implemented in the early 1980s, led by the architects Rodney Melville and John Bucknall. This was funded by the National Heritage Memorial Fund, with contributions by the Landmark Trust, the Historic Buildings Council, Department of the Environment, Victoria and Albert Museum, public donations, and proceeds from the sale of the Woodyard Barn. This work included significant repairs to stabilise the structure and prevent further subsidence, the insertion of a steel frame to support the Drawing Room ceiling, repair and replacement of timberwork throughout the house, and the conservation of painted decoration including the rediscovered paint scheme of the Winter Parlour.



Eyre and Jeffrey's map of 1791 Fig 3

The south and west elevations, undated photograph, late 19th century (P/9590)
Fig 4

The west elevation, undated photograph, late 19th century (P/1634) Fig 5

The east and north elevations, undated photograph, late 19th century (DR/25/54/51) Fig 6

4.1. Listing description

CANONS ASHBY SP5750 19/29 Canons Ashby House 18/09/53 (Formerly listed as Canons Ashby Hall) GV I Country house. Mid C16 with earlier origins, extended c.1590, embellished c.1632, south front remodelled and other alterations made 1708-10. Coursed ironstone rubble, ironstone ashlar, brick, limestone dressings, tile roofs, stacks mostly brick, some stone. H-plan, extended to courtyard plan.

5-window west range to Green Court, entrance front until c.1840, of brick rendered, has early C18 central 8-panel double-leaf door in moulded stone frame with console keyblock flanked by plain Doric pilasters, supporting plain frieze, inflected cornice and broken pediment framing lead cartouche; original blocked C16 service door to left with 4-centred arch head and carved spandrels. To right and left, 3-light leaded mullion and transom windows; 3-light mullion windows to first floor. Gabled ends break forward and have 2 12-pane sashes to ground floor with moulded stone sills and plain surrounds with keyblocks, blocked to left end, 4-light mullion and transom windows with hood moulds to first floor, 3-light mullion windows in gables; mullions arched to right wing. Moulded plinth, quoins to angles. First floor string, fine lead rainwater heads and pipes flanking central bay. 2 brick lateral stacks left of centre, and central timber cupola with clock rebuilt 1981 to original early C18 design.

9-window south range to garden has rendered brick, 4-storey, tower left of centre with 8-panel door, approached by flight of 5 steps with shaped angles, with moulded stone surround, console keyblock, and broken segmental pediment. To right a 5-light mullion window. 3-light arch-mullion windows to first and second floors, all with hood moulds and similar window to fourth floor. Tower has a round stair turret with ogee lead roof and weather vane to rear left angle beside brick stack. Rest of range of 2 storeys, ashlar faced, 3 bays to left of tower, 5 to right, with 24-pane sashes, surrounds as above. 2-light mullion windows to basement, moulded plinth and storey band. Right gable end has 2-light mullion window with hood mould to gable and evidence of blocked and dismantled first floor oriel; long timber lintel with blocked opening below.

Irregular 6-window brick north range has 2 and 3 storeys and mezzanine. 2-storey canted bays either end with mullion and transom windows except to upper window of left bay - mullioned only, tall 2-light mullion and transom windows to right of centre lighting kitchen, two 24-pane sashes to left with stone surrounds as above. 2-and 3 light mullion windows to ground, mezzanine and third floors and 2-light arch-mullion recess to left of right end bay, just above moulded plinth. Stepped string broken by mezzanine window. Brick and stone ridge stacks. Left gable end has second floor oriel, originally matching blocked oriel already mentioned, with mullion and transom window, and 1-light side pieces, a 3-light mullion window below and to ground floor (2 blocked first floor sash windows).

East entrance front of 2 storeys is lower than the other ranges and has irregular fenestration. Chamfered carriage arch to right of arch. Various wood mullion and mullion and transom windows and a 2-storey double-hipped projection to left with small brick arched basement doorway. No plinth to left of arch.

Rubble masonry and irregular fenestration to Pebble Court. 4-centred arched door to hall to right of centre is approached by flight of 7 steps. Re-used medieval stonework to this side of north range. Plain stone caped parapets except to east range. Interior: spectacular

Jacobean plasterwork and overmantel in Drawing Room, former 'Great Chamber'. C16 painted decoration in studio and Spencer Room, early C18 Painted Parlour. Evidence of open roof to hall in rooms to side of Brown Gallery and possible Long Gallery in top storey of north range. Seat of the Drydens since mid C16; given to National Trust in 1981.

(HE 2018a, https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1075304)

5 EXTERNAL DESCRIPTION

The house, as described by Henry Dryden, "stands diagonally to north and south; each exterior face being about 100 feet. It encloses a quadrangle, measuring 52 feet by 37 feet. The wings project 12 feet on the north-west face, which is the front. On the south-west side of the quadrangle is a tower 50 feet high. The house was built at different periods, and has been much altered inside and out" (ZA472).

5.1. North elevation (Figs 7-17)

This elevation provides the only largescale exposed brickwork of the house, the west elevation being rendered over (Figs 7, 16). The two and three storey elevation spans a distance of *c*29.4m and is *c*8.8m in height at the west end and 9.8m at the east end due to the eastward slope of the road. The elevation has 6 to 9 bays depending on how they are counted and presents an irregular arrangement of mismatched fenestration which is balanced by a pair of full height canted bays though these also are not a matching pair having different sized windows within them.

Along the bottom of the wall is a continuous stone plinth which is also carried around the bays. The plinth comprises roughly shaped ironstone rubble arranged in courses of variable block size and is capped by moulded coping. The plinth course reaches a maximum height of *c*1.3m at the east corner of the elevation. A possible break in plinth course phasing can be seen approximately mid-way to the elevation.

A moulded string course spans most of the width of the wall, wrapping around the bays but stopping short of the junction with the east elevation. The string course has a vertical change in level approximately mid-way to the wall and rises *c*1.4m (Fig 8). This rise corresponds with a distinct change in the brickwork and marks a change of phase in the building's development. To the east of and butting up to the vertical rise is a rectangular stone block *c*1m x 0.3m. The dating and reason for this anomalous block is unclear. The eastern span of the string course is interrupted by a window to the mid-level or mezzanine corridor.

At the top of the elevation is a parapet *c*1.2m in height and including the projecting bays. At its base is a stone string course with a curved moulding which brings the parapet face out from the main face of the wall. Above this are approximately ten courses of brickwork and a course of narrow rectangular stone blocks. The facing bricks are primarily modern repairs. The parapet is capped by pitched, roll-moulded coping stones. The parapet walkway is *c*1m in width and covered with overlapping lead sheets which are stepped down from the west to allow for better drainage. There are three decorative lead water chutes that drain water from the parapet walkway. The chutes are open-topped square section channels carried over planks. The upper part of the lead sides have been cut and folded to produce a scale-like decoration and the ends of the chutes have been cut to complete a dragon or serpentine motif. Modern safety harness points have been installed on the inside face of the parapet coping and modern brick repairs can be seen along the inner face of the wall.

The eastern canted bay projects *c*0.7-0.8m from the elevation and is *c*3.9m wide and 9.7m in height. The brickwork is in Flemish bond with dimensions as follows: five courses are 280mm in height and the bricks are of variable dimension 230-250mm x 45-50mm x 110-120mm. At the corners of the bay are shaped ironstone quoins often with diagonal tool marks and these were measured as between 170-290mm in height and 135-150mm in width. The first floor window is an ovolo moulded mullion and transom with chamfered corners comprising twelve lights, each with rectangular pattern glazing (Fig 11). Most of the lights are fixed but three of the taller lower lights are iron framed and side hung casements. These have decorative iron turnbuckle catches, likely 17th century in date, and monkey tail stays. A modern frame with sliding glass was installed inside the window during the 1980s restorations. The window has a

moulded stone sill and ovolo and hollow hood mould. At the edges of the window are an awkward arrangement of bricks and tiles which fill the space between the irregular stone work of the jambs and the change of angle to the wall face. The moulded hood over the upper window is misaligned with the adjacent string course that forms the base of the parapet.

The upper window of the bay is a six-light ovolo mullion window with chamfered corners. The window has a moulded sill and hood which match those of the lower window. Several of the stones have been replaced during conservation works. On the window sill, internally, are two compass-drawn graffiti, one eroded, and the other in a good state of preservation (Fig 234). The two angled lights are side hung iron-framed casements with decorative swivel catches and monkey tail or spiral stays.

Both windows of the eastern bay were blocked and rendered during the 19th century and the blocking is visible on several historic photographs of the period (Local Studies ref: DR/25/54/51). These were re-opened by Sir Henry Dryden in the late 19th century and the current glazing dates to that period.

At ground level, to the east side of the eastern bay is a two-light ovolo mullion window to the former Laundry whose eastern jamb is awkwardly abutted by the angle of the bay. This window was likely formerly a three-light window matching its neighbours and suggests that the bay is a later addition. The stonework presents a mixture of patina hues and the sill members are not a precise match for the mullions, suggesting that the window is a composite of members. A deliberate notch is located on the underside of the upper-left corner of the left light. Similar notches were also noted on several of the other windows on this elevation. Both lights are steel-framed casements with lattice glazing and both have simple turnbuckle catches. Internally the window has wooden shutters and square-section iron stanchions.

Adjacent are two three-light ovolo mullion windows to the former Bakehouse. The eastern of the two has lattice glazing and the central light is side hung with a simple turnbuckle latch. All three have pairs of square-section stanchions. A deliberate notch is cut into the upper-left corner of the casement frame. Lead flashing has been added to the sill below the fixed lights. A small overlapping W or Ave Marie motif, *c*40mm in width, is carved into the lower western jamb.

A matching three-light ovolo mullion window of similar proportions lights the western half of the bakehouse. The frame is an almost total composite of moulded stone from different sources which have been recycled into a new window. The central light is side-hung with an iron frame and lattice glazing, and a deliberate notch is cut into the upper left corner of the stone frame. It has two turnbuckle latches and a tall tulip leaf handle. The fixed lights also have lattice glazing tied to square section stanchions. A levelling layer of thin tiles separates the sill from the plinth course.

Lighting the kitchen is a pair of tall wooden-framed transom windows, each *c*1.4m x 3m. These windows date to Edward Dryden's 18th-century alterations and improvements to the house in which the kitchen was much enlarged. Both are dropped onto the top of the plinth course such that the flashing at the sill is draped over the plinth coping. The timber lintels are exposed in the wall and have chamfered underside edges and scroll stops. The fixed lower lights are about twice the height of the upper lights and have lattice glazing. One each of the upper lights is centrally pivoted to allow ventilation to the kitchen. There is some evidence that both windows replace smaller earlier ones. An inspection of the surrounding brickwork reveals two columns of defunct brick header spacers, one to the right side of the east window and one to the left of the west window. These begin at *c*300mm from the current window sills and rise a height of 1.5m, each column comprising 13 spacers. The visible face of the bricks were measured as 45mm x 50mm. Those spacers adjacent to the eastern window were partially truncated by the new window. A short vertical line in the brickwork can

be seen between the two windows and adjacent to a patch of repair and may therefore be related to the modern repair rather than a historic alteration.

An unusual alcove with unconfirmed function is located adjacent to the western bay window (Fig 9). The alcove forms a rectangular space 1.5m in width, 1.2m in height and 0.9m deep. It has stone quoins and arched stone headers as well as a central stone post. Unlike the dark ironstone which makes up the majority of the stonework of the house, those of the alcove are pale yellow / orange sandy limestone and are favoured by pale lichen. The less exposed stones at the rear of the alcove have a deeper orange hue than the more weathered external stones. The floor is flush with the level of the plinth coping and is composed of stone flags and bricks laid flat. Spanning the top of the alcove are wooden lintels. The brickwork of the wall continues into and around the alcove walls and is arranged into a series of hollow spaces formed by gaps in the brick coursing. The bricks forming the walls were measured as 240-250mm x 110mm x 40-50mm, and five courses were 330mm in height. The gaps were of a variable size and depth, 80-110mm wide and 160-220mm deep and were either one or two courses in height. It was noted that many of the gaps are connected to each other within the wall.

Of particular interest is the concentration of dot pattern graffiti found on the stones of the alcove opening (Fig 10). While not immediately obvious due to their shallow nature, natural erosion and lichen coverage, close inspection reveals a great number of these markings on both the central pier and the quoins. They are in nearly all cases to found in groups of nine and comprise shallow circular gouges often connected by linear scratches into square grids. The patterns are small, generally around 300mm in width. Other individual and groups of linear scratches of no immediately discernible pattern, though some resemble tally marks, can also be seen across the stones. It has been noted that dot pattern graffiti are often found in religious contexts such as on churches, shrines, or other places with spiritual associations, although they may also be found on secular buildings (NMGS 2018). The uneven number of dots, i.e. three, five, seven, nine etc., in some contexts can have religious connotations with the trinity and sacrament, and plays a significant role in magic and mystery in many other cultures such as Kabbalah and astrology. Such patterns have also been identified with Nine Men's Morris boards, a historic strategy game, though having an apotropaic value when found as graffiti (Ingram 2015). It is also suggested that when found in conjunction with religious locations, these markings may be related to folk remedy and healing practices in which the ground dust collected from the consecrated stones would be mixed with wine or honey to produce a medicinal drink or ointment (Champion *pers comm* 2018). These markings were not found anywhere else on the property and their deliberate focus on the alcove may be suggestive of a specific apotropaic practice.

Various explanations for the purpose of the alcove have been proposed including a shelter for drovers, a place for charitable food for passers-by, and a ventilation system for a former kitchen oven. The alcove is much too small to fit more than one person and then very awkwardly and the gaps in the stonework do not appear to be ideal for food offerings when a simple shelf would suffice. A vertical join for a feature predating the current bread oven was noted on the opposite side of the wall to the alcove however while the perforations on the rear wall of the alcove may allow smoke or heat dispersal, those on the side walls would not be able to perform such a function. It has been suggested that the gaps may have been used for bird nests, similar to a dovecote, however any birds or eggs here would be at risk from theft and predators such as cats. The use of the alcove for the housing of bee skeps may be a plausible theory, particularly in association with the dot pattern graffiti which as previously noted may have medicinal association with honey. The location of any skeps on the exterior of the house deliberately places them in the publically accessible domain and their

inclusion within the house suggests that the Drydens deliberately provided a publically accessible feature, assuming that such was the original intent of the alcove. If the ground dust from the dot pattern graffiti was indeed for medicinal use, the stones from which the dust was derived must have an inherent spiritual potency and it is likely therefore that they were sourced from the remains of the priory. While it may seem unlikely to ascribe such behaviour to the puritanical Dryden family, the prevalence of tapered candle burns in parts of the house may suggest that such ritualistic practice was not incompatible with their religious beliefs. The least visible and inaccessible candle burns on some of the framing timbers were likely produced by the craftsmen and builders, however the most prominently visible ones in the Winter Parlour and Long Gallery could not have escaped the notice of the family and are more likely to have been produced by them or at least with their consent.

Alternatively, it has been suggested that the use of twin lancet or arched windows may be a feature of 17th-century craftsmanship included purely for decorative purposes and presenting a medieval appearance; however most recorded examples of this type of feature were located in the gable and were either unglazed or blocked / non-functioning (Wood-Jones 1963, 254) and such an explanation does not explain the deliberate gaps in the brickwork forming the sides of the alcove.

At first floor level are two sash windows (2.4m x 1m) with stone surrounds looking from the private apartment Sitting Room and WC. These are twelve over twelve wooden sashes with the bottom sash sliding upwards (Fig 235). The thickness of the glazing bars and number of small panes, as well as the exposed sash boxes, are suggestive of an earlier 18th century date however both windows have simple chamfered horns, a feature of sash windows which appeared from the mid 19th century as a means of strengthening the window frame (Hall 2011). A comparison with other repairs of the 1980s suggests that the current windows are modern replacements of the original sashes. During the 1980s work new frames were set within the internal window openings in order to better insulate the apartment. The stone surrounds comprise simple sill and jambs with keystone lintels. Around the upper half of both windows and to the underside of the string course can be seen the blocked and truncated remains of two former windows (Fig 14). The westernmost former window retains much of its stone jambs and the connections to the former sill and lintel, while only the upper corner of one jamb remains on the eastern window and the extent of the former opening can be discerned by irregular lines in the surrounding brickwork. It is probable that the former window openings were approximately 1m x 1m. As will be discussed further in this report, the sills of these windows are at mid-level to the current sashes and cannot work with the existing floor level in these rooms.

At the western side of the elevation is a tall two-light ovolo mullion window which looks out from the mid-level or mezzanine corridor above the kitchen. The stone frame, which is *c*1.1m x 1.8m, interrupts the string course and sits awkwardly close to the adjacent kitchen window such that the corner of the frame forms part of the kitchen window jamb. This arrangement is likely due to the enlargement of the kitchen by Erasmus Dryden. Several parts of the stone frame are modern and perhaps 19th-century repair pieces. Both lights are fixed and have lattice glazing with much smaller panes than seen elsewhere on the building.

At second floor level, at the eastern side of the elevation is a pair of three-light ovolo mullion windows opening to the upper private apartment bedroom and the adjacent WC. The windows are of identical proportions, 1m high and 1.6m wide, with ironstone quoins, sill and mullions, and these appear to form uniform sets in contrast to the mismatched windows seen elsewhere. The tops of both windows abut the underside of the parapet string course. The central light of the eastern window has a deliberate notch in the upper corner; this is not present on the neighbouring window. Both windows have rectangular glazing rather than the prevailing lattice pattern. On both

windows the central lights are side-hung and the flanking lights are fixed. The eastern casement has a decorative swivel catch and spiral-tailed stay and the western window has a simpler turnbuckle catch and tulip leaf stay.

At second floor level on the western side of the elevation are two ovolo mullion windows of matching proportions and these open to the Staff Room and the Sitting Room. The eastern window comprises a mix of stone types and is an amalgamation of re-used window elements forming the whole, although this effect may be the result of multiple repairs to the frame. The bottom half of the central light is side-hung with lattice glazing, a decorative swivel latch and quadrant stay with a simple iron knob handle. The flanking fixed lights also have lattice glazing and both have iron square-section stanchions. The western window also has a side-hung panel in the central light, this window swinging in the opposite direction to the neighbouring window. The casement panel has a turnbuckle latch and a quadrant stay with tulip leaf handle and the lattice glazing is held by a pair of iron saddle bars. The flanking lights have lattice glazing and both have square-section stanchions. The stonework of the window frames and mullions are again an amalgamation of window elements, though here it is more likely the result of large-scale repairs and replacement of the original stonework.

The western canted bay is 4m in width and projects *c*0.6m from the wall face, rising to a height of 9.8m. The plinth course and moulded coping is continued around the base of the bay. The brickwork of the bay is a mixture of earlier fabric and 20th century repairs, and the earlier bricks were measured as 230-240mm x 60-70mm x 42-50mm, with five courses measuring 295mm. The brickwork forming the edges of the bay does not appear to be keyed into the brickwork of the wall face, instead forming a straight join, indicating that the bay is a later addition to the wall.

The ground floor window to the Winter Parlour (Servants' Hall) is bounded by a moulded string course which wraps around the full width of the bay, stopping at the joins to the main wall. The window has twelve lights, six over six, separated by ovolo transoms and mullions, and with chamfered or splayed king mullions at the corners. The mullions are much more weathered than the transoms and surrounding frame, with a lighter orange-yellow patina, suggesting that the surrounding stonework has been repaired and replaced. The ovolo moulding is not continued on the sills which are stepped and chamfered instead. The lights have lattice glazing and are fixed except for the side-hung lower lights at the bay angles. These have iron frames and both have decorative swivel latches and spiral-tail stays. All of the lights have internal square-section stanchions. The top of the window abuts the stone string course that runs the full span of the elevation. A letter *E* is carved into the eastern king mullion and *R* is carved into the western jamb (Fig 13). A letter *E* is also carved onto the underside of the upper frame at the eastern angle. It is unclear if these are graffiti or masons' marks.

The upper level window is of similar proportions to the lower and also has ovolo transom and mullions with chamfered king mullions (Fig 12). Instead of having full panel casements at the lower side lights, the two side-hung panels comprise only part of the light such that the quadrant stays are elevated above the sill (Fig 234). The casement panels have iron frames with simple turnbuckle catches and tulip leap handles. All of the lights have lattice glazing of a smaller dimension to that on the window below.

The brickwork of the elevation reveals a patchwork of variable composition with differentiation of brick type and coursing. To some degree this is due to the widespread repair work needed during the conservation efforts in the 1980s, while other areas relate to alterations to the fenestration. The most obvious change in brickwork is related to the two stages of phasing that resulted in the current layout of the northern range. As will be discussed further in this report, the north-west corner of the house was among the earliest parts of the building and was remodelled and expanded by

John Dryden in the mid 16th century. Erasmus Dryden then expanded upon the house to complete the courtyard plan with two parallel ranges enveloping the formerly free-standing eastern range. A difference in brickwork may be noted between the east and west halves of the elevation with an irregular join running the full height of the building and marked by the abrupt vertical rise in the string course, as well as by the axial chimney which is positioned between the two phases of building. The bricks forming the western half of the elevation were arranged in Flemish bond – alternating headers and stretchers, and had variable dimensions as follows: 230-245mm x 110-120mm x 45-49mm, five courses measured 290mm in height. Few skintles were noted on the bricks which displayed uneven firing with frequent patches of darker colour. At the eastern side of the elevation the brickwork was in irregular Flemish bond utilising both headers and half-length bricks between the stretchers. The brickwork here shows a decorative effect with burnt headers forming linear patterns though the effect has been lessened due to repairs such that it is now sporadic.

There is a possible horizontal change in brickwork at ground floor at the eastern side of the elevation in which the line of change spans from the edge of the bay, running just above the three ground floor windows and up to the main vertical change in fabric (Fig 16).

The north-eastern axial chimney has four flues and is connected at ground floor to the bakehouse fireplace and oven, and at the upper floors to the former Nursery, Solomon's Room and Bachelors Room, these now comprising the first floor bedroom and Sitting Room, and the second floor bedroom though it is possible that the Oriel Room may also have had a fireplace in the west wall. The chimney is externally built of well-dressed ashlar with moulded coping at the crown and with small terracotta pots to each flue. Three of flues are set in a N-S row and the fourth, serving the Bachelors Room was added in 1861. A drawing of the chimney was produced by Sir Henry Dryden in July 1861 (D(CA)472 1861). The chimney partly collapsed and was repaired in 1880 as follows:

> In Sep 1880 part of the top of the chimney fell & broke a hole in the roof. Many of the stones of the chimney were broken and burnt. I took 2 courses off the chimney & got a new top from Harlestone. Altered the form a little cramped it with copper cramps some for the shaft 5 inches long & those for the head 8 inches long. Put it on at end of October & beginning of November (D(CA)472 1880).

The central chimney of the north range serves the cooking ranges at the east side of the kitchen as well as the Staff Room and second floor WC. The chimney marks the join between John Dryden's house and Erasmus Dryden's eastward flanking extensions and is built against the exterior of the masonry end gable. The chimney has a similar construction style to the north-east chimney to the Bakehouse and is faced in dressed ashlar and crowned with moulded stone coping. Six terracotta chimney pots are visible on the top and sealed with flaunching.

The fireplaces to the Sitting Room and Winter Parlour are served by a brick chimney set at the edge of the parapet towards the north-west corner of the building. The main part of the stack rises from stone coping joined to the parapet coping and the bricks measure 223-233mm x 105-110mm x 60-65mm, with five courses being 380mm in height. These bricks are likely mid to late 17th or early 18th century, post-dating the fireplaces. The upper part of the stack steps inward slightly and is continued in a different brick type but is likely contemporary in date. The chimney crown comprises 19th century bricks with a modern clay chimney pot. The base of the chimney, below the stone coping was repaired in modern brick and fitted with lead flashing.

General view of the north elevation Fig 7

The rise in string course marking a change in phasing; note anomalous stone block Fig 8

The arched alcove Fig 9

Detail of dot pattern graffiti Fig 10

The lower eastern bay window Fig 11

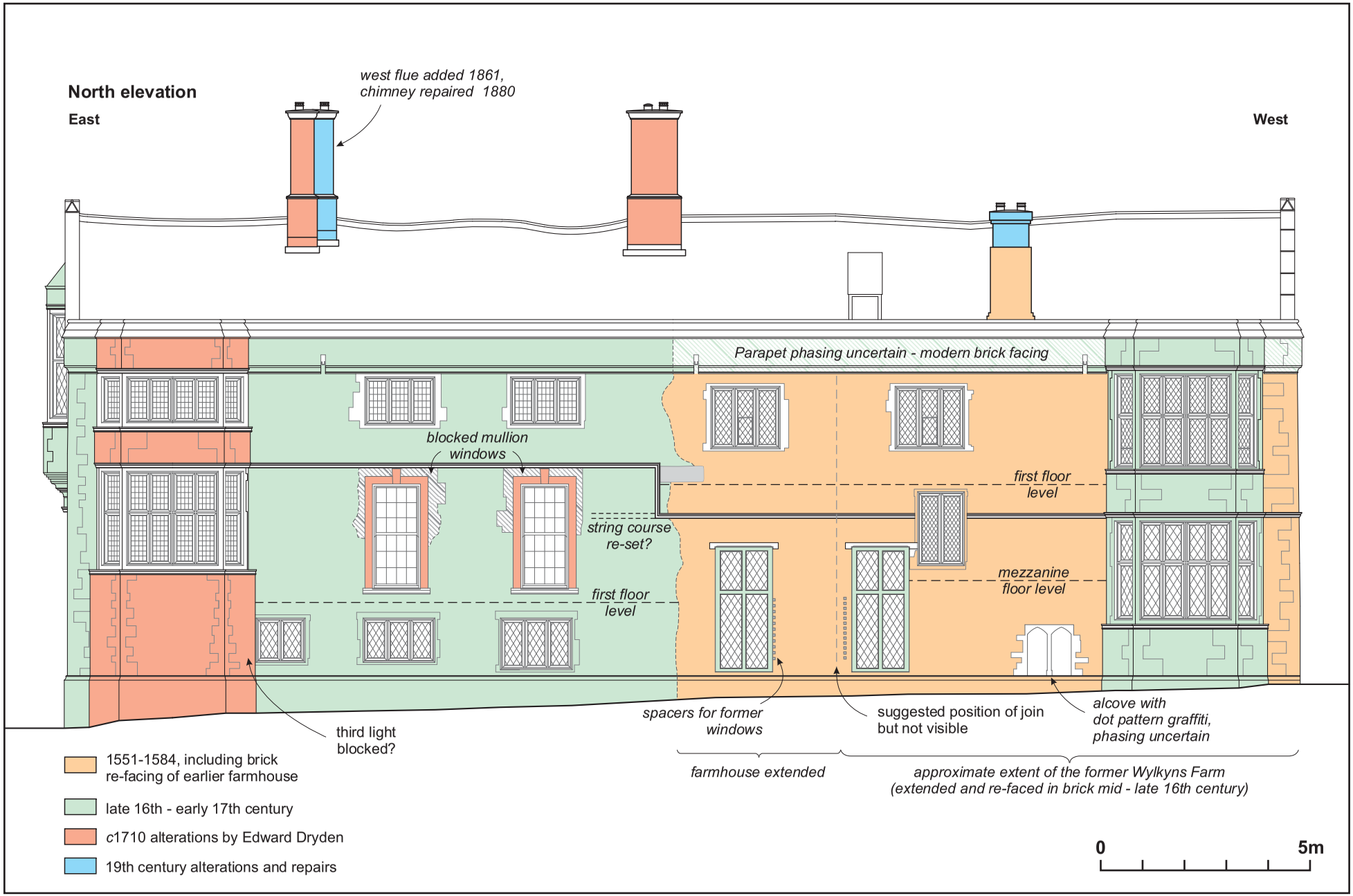
The upper western bay window Fig 12

Detail of Masons mark on the window head of the lower western bay window Fig 13

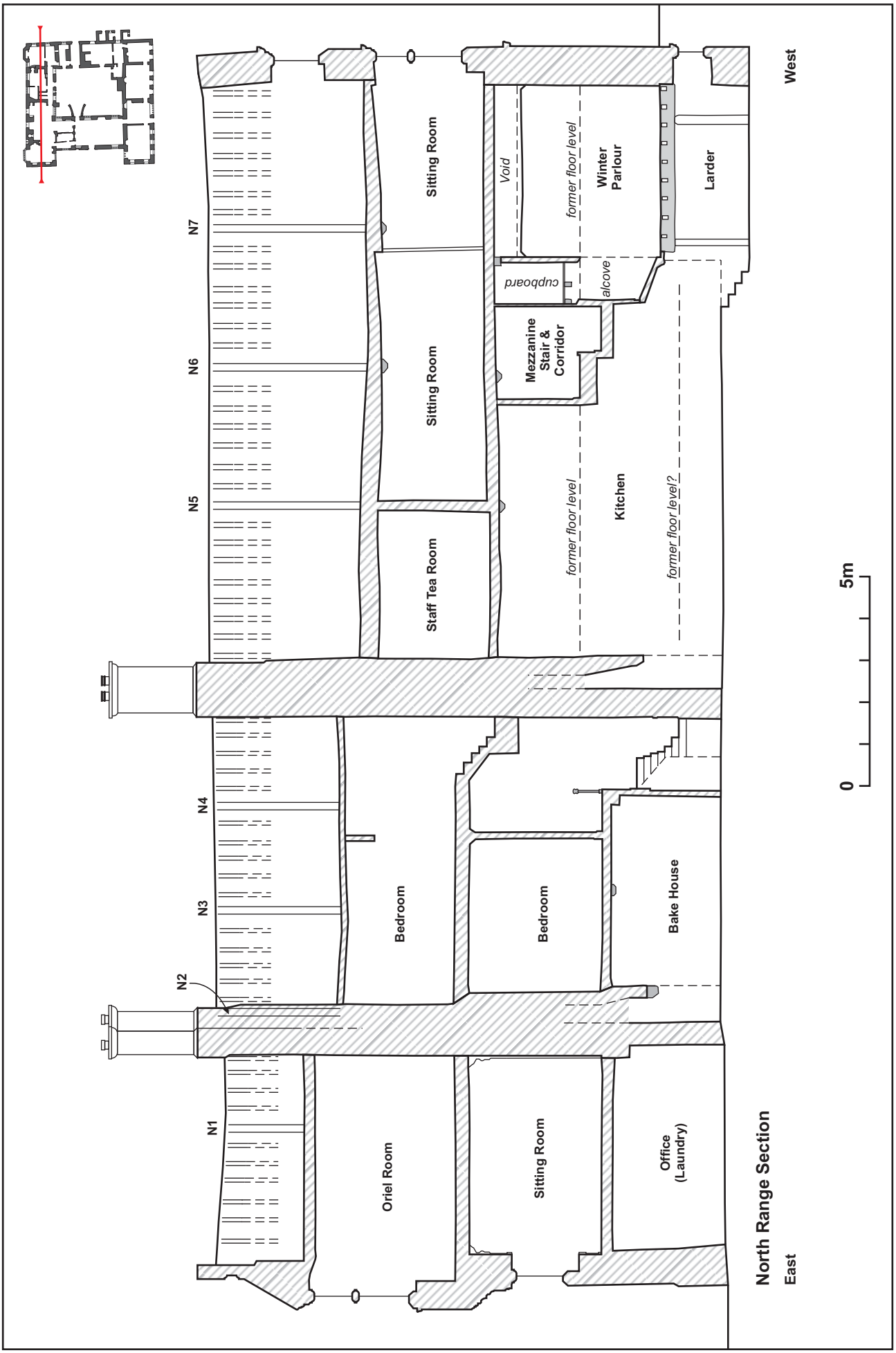
Detail of sash window with remains of blocked mullion window Fig 14

The mezzanine corridor window, showing the awkward position to the later kitchen window Fig 15

Scale 1:125 (A4)



The north elevation Fig 16



Scale 1:125 (A4) Longitudinal section of the north range Fig 17

5.2. West elevation (Figs 18-29)

The west range, formerly the primary house façade and main entrance, was built by John Dryden in the late 16th century when he joined the Tower House to the earlier Wylkyns Farmhouse which now forms the north-west corner of Canons Ashby House. This created an H-plan house with projecting gables (Figs 18, 29). The elevation was reordered to enhance its symmetry during Edward Dryden's phase of alterations around 1710. The elevation is wholly faced in brick which has been concealed under render, leaving only the quoins exposed. A late 19th century photograph appears to show that the render or stucco was formerly scored to resemble ashlar, as can also be seen on parts of the east range (NRO ref: P/1636).

The south gable is three storeys with a basement and is *c*7.2m in width and rises to a height of *c*11.5m from ground level, (not including the light wells to the basement windows). It projects *c*3.7m from the central span of the elevation.

Mostly hidden from the outside by nearby vegetation, the west-facing basement window of the south gable is a two-light cavetto mullion with arched heads and spandrels. The two lights have lattice glazing in which the upper central quarries comprise lead plates with circular pattern perforation. Pairs of stanchions secure the glazing of each light. A similar window is also located on the north-facing side of the gable.

At ground level are two sash windows to the Dining Room and both of identical proportions measuring 2.4m x 1.1m. The two sash windows of the north elevation and those on the south elevation are of the same dimensions. Both windows are set in simple stone surrounds with moulded sills and simple keystones and comprise six over six upward sliding sashes. The southern window has small sash horns similar to those noted on the windows of the west elevation and may be a 1980s replacement. The glazing bars have simple beading at the arrises and the frames are tenoned and pegged.

At the north side of the gable at ground floor level is a three-light cavetto mullion window with four-centred arched heads and recessed spandrels, and a carved hood mould with stops (Fig 22). The window is recessed from the wall face by a chamfered surround. The lights have small scale lattice glazing and it is possible that the lower part of the central light was formerly side hung. The window is not visible from within the Dining Room as it was panelled over and the back of the panelling is visible through the window. Pairs of square-section bars can be seen internally to the window and pairs of thin bars cross each light, joining the sides of the glazing frame.

At first floor level on the north side of the gable is another cavetto mullion window with arched lights and recessed spandrels and with a moulded hood mould with stops. The lattice glazing is again small scale compared to that seen elsewhere on the property.

The ground and first floor levels are separated by a string course which begins at the distal corner of the south elevation and spans around the north side of the projecting gable, ending at the perpendicular join to the central wall. A string course also spans the width of the central wall but has a different design to that on the gable and the two courses are slightly misaligned (Fig 24). The gable string course has a simple chamfered profile and on the west face is raised at the centre.

The first floor level window on the west side of the south gable is a very well-built window with much greater decorative emphasis than the surrounding windows, emphasising the status of the Tapestry Room (Figs 19, 234). In keeping with the prevailing moulding style on this part of the house, the mullions are cavetto moulded but with an additional roll along the spine. The recessed surround, instead of being simply chamfered, is deeply carved with hollow and rolls. A moulded hood with stops spans the top of the window. All of the lights are fixed and have small scale lattice

glazing. The window has undergone fairly substantial repairs during the conservation to the house and several of the mullions and part of the transom, as well as portions of the surround, have been re-built. The window is not publically visible from within the room as it is behind the large bed and tapestries. Internally, the mullions have ogee moulds along the cavetto spines. The stonework of the inner face is fully painted in a dark red colour (Fig 20). The window splays are panelled and have elaborate gilt painted motifs at the centre of each field. The decorative work here is comparable to the paint scheme on the panelling of the Winter Parlour (Fig 21).

At the top of the gable is a three-light cavetto moulded window with arched lights and hollow and roll stone surround instead of a simple chamfered recess. The lower portion of the central light is side-hung with an iron frame, quadrant stay and simple turnbuckle latch. The three lights have lattice glazing and the flanking lights have square profile stanchions internally. The window can be enclosed by internal shutters which cover only the lower part of the window. Parts of the surround and mullions have been replaced during conservation works.

The roof slopes down to a parapet *c*1.2m in height which acts to hide the roof to view from the ground (Figs 26, 28). The parapet is brick-built with render and the base is marked by a lightly projecting stone string course with simple curved moulding. The parapet coping is formed of a double course of chamfered and pyramidal stones, the outer faces being rolled outward at the top. There are occasional square projections to the rear side of the coping and these have holes and iron spikes which appear to have formerly secured finials. This was also noted by Gotch in 1906 (D(CA)513). The coping stones are likely to have been reused from the priory rather than being made specifically for the house. It has been noted that a payment was made in May 1713 for the coping to walls of the Green Court (Heward and Taylor 1996, 122).

The central span of the elevation is 16.2m in width and rises 8.9m including the 1.2m parapet (Fig 23). At the centre of the wall is an elaborate Baroque-style door with Tuscan pilasters which was installed by Edward Dryden in around 1708-1710. Above the door is a broken segmental pediment with a decorative lead cartouche and coat of arms, probably by Jan Van Nost who also created the lead Shepherd Boy statue located in the front of the west garden gates (Bailey *et al* 2013). To each side of the door are lead downpipes with elaborate decorated heads including scrollwork, green man and leaf motifs and with the initials E D. The date 1708 is picked out in raised lettering at each corner of the hopper. This doorway replaces an earlier door to the hall which was blocked and rendered over by Edward in order to create a symmetrical arrangement of fenestration.

The northern downpipe cuts across the early door and a column of brick has been left in-situ to support the pipe. The door is in the four-centred arch Tudor style with spandrels bearing the arms of the Dryden and Cope families. The opening measures 1.2m in width and *c*1.9m high. The moulding is ovolo and chamfer in fairly low relief. Sir Henry Dryden produced an annotated drawing of the doorway on which he noted “Old front doorway, 1551-84” “Bricks 10" long, 4 ½" wide 2" deep, header & stretcher in each course, 4 courses in 9 inches” (D(CA)470a Undated). The drawing notes original plinths to each side of the doorway with inserted plinth between.

To each side of the central door are ovolo mullion and transom windows, each of six lights, three over three. The stone blocks comprising each window, while forming a comprehensive whole do not fit together comfortably and while repairs and replacement of some of the stone may account for this, it is probable that the windows were put together from recycled framing elements. This is more evident when viewed internally and where the sill of the northern window is formed of multiple elements cut to size and with possible blocking of earlier mullion holes, and the ovolo spine is mismatched between the mullions and the sill. The western window is internally cut by

the floor of the mezzanine level bedroom (Fig 25). The window is later than the room and two side hung panels were added above and below the floor. Both have turnbuckle latches and the lower panel had a simple iron stay. The southern window has no moveable elements.

The first and ground floors are divided by a moulded string course with short shoulders where it meets the projecting bays and with a break to accommodate the central door pediment.

At first floor level are three matching windows, each three-light with ovolo mullions. All three windows display the same slight mismatch of the mullions with the sills and lintels though it is unclear to what extent this is due to the reuse of disparate elements or to repairs. Each light has lattice glazing and the central light of each window is side hung with an iron frame. The casements have a matching set of decorative swivel latches and spiral-tail stays.

A basement window is located in a lightwell at the join of the central wall and the projecting south gable. This window is rectangular with cavetto mullions and chamfered sill and it is likely to be a reclaimed window from the former tower house, truncated of its former arched head and fitted with a new lintel. The surrounding stonework on the internal face of the wall is almost wholly modern. The lights have lattice glazing in which the upper central quarries are perforated lead sheets.

The northern gable projects 3m west from the central wall and is *c*5.8m in width, rising to 11.6m from ground level to the gable ridge. It is effectively symmetrical to the southern gable elevation though with variation to the window types.

At basement level, illuminating the Larder are two rectangular, ovolo mullion windows with chamfered sills and lintels; one window is on the west-facing wall and the other on the south-facing bay return. The lights have lattice glazing and each has one perforated quarry. The lintel of the west facing window has been replaced in ironstone.

At ground floor level on the west-facing wall are two former sash windows, now bricked over and rendered and these have matching stone surrounds to those on the southern gable. The string course of the elevation is continued above these windows and wraps around the west elevation. The string course has a matching short rise at the centre of the wall.

A first floor level, facing west is an eight-light ovolo mullion and transom window with lead flashing over the sills of each light. The window measures roughly 2.2m square. Over the window is a hood mould with stops. The stonework of the window has a much lighter pale yellow colour compared to the dark purple-red of the hood mould and the mullion windows on the central part of the elevation. The lights have fairly large lattice glazing and one of the lower lights is side-hung with an iron frame and a decorative swivel latch with twisted handle and simple iron stay. Square-section stanchions are located in each light except the casement.

At the top of the gable and looking into the roof space is a three-light ovolo mullion window, 1.6m wide x 1.3m tall, with an ovolo and hollow hood mould over. When viewed from within the roof space the window frame appears to be fairly uniform but some discrepancy is evident on the external side, however this might be due to differential weathering of the elements and later repairs. All three lights are fixed, with large size lattice glazing, and each has an internal square section stanchion.

At ground level on the south side of the north gable is a three-light ovolo mullion window which lights the Servants' Hall. The lights are fixed with comparatively small-scale diamond-pattern glazing and each has an internal square-section bar to which the glazing is wired. Parts of the surround, mullions and sill, both externally and

internally have been replaced during repairs. A hood mould is installed over the window. Lead flashing has been installed under the sill and at the base of each light.

At first floor level is another three-light ovolo mullion window of the same proportions as that below, this one lighting the Sitting Room. The three lights are fixed and contain fairly small-scale lattice glazing with internal stanchions.

5.2.1. Gotch's observations of the west elevation

Due to the almost total rendering of the elevation it was not possible to see any of the underlying fabric and while certain alterations and phases can be inferred it was not possible to observe or record them during this survey. The render was stripped and renewed in the 1980s but no photographs of the exposed west elevation or the south elevation and tower were found during research for this project. It is fortunate however that the architect J A Gotch observed the stripping of the render from this wall in October 1906 and recorded his observations (D(CA)513).

Gotch confirmed that a ground floor window, matching in dimensions that surviving at first floor level, was located on the west facing wall of the south gable. This window fitted the width of the rise in the string course that separates the two levels. Although the window was fully infilled in brick, the head and topmost stone of each jamb were visible and the blocking brickwork had a noticeable difference in pointing to the brickwork of the surrounding wall.

It was noted that the southern ground floor window of the central part of the elevation was formerly a four-light which was reduced to a three-light (Fig 24). The south light was "built up with odd pieces of stone" and the right-hand jamb remained. This blocking accounts for the distance of the window to the drop in the string course. It was not mentioned whether the northern ground floor window was also subject to a reduction in width, however it is set a similar distance from the drop in string course and in order to maintain symmetry such a modification would be required.

Gotch's sketch of the primary brick pointing of the elevation appears to show it as having an inverted V shape though flush with the wall face. "The original pointing is carried up nearly to the central doorway on each side of it, the brickwork immediately adjoining the stonework of the doorway was evidently rebuilt when doorway was inserted."

Just above the earlier door to the hall was a straight join in the brickwork running up to the string course. Above this, spanning from the string to the parapet was an irregular vertical joint. A similar irregular join roughly opposite to this is evident on the courtyard facing elevation of the west range. As discussed further in this report, these observations support the idea of a multi-phased development of the west range with the north-western corner predating the hall.

To the left of the old doorway Gotch noted a "built up orifice, but without any architectural character." His sketch places this 2' 8" (81cm) to the left of the door and it measured 1' 4" x 7" (40cm x 18cm).

MOLA archaeologists, when recording the cellar, observed a distinct vertical join with quoins in the stonework of the west wall, in the middle vaulted room, **C10**. The join rose from behind the brickwork of the root boxes and up to, and presumably beyond, the brick vault. This change corresponds with the right-hand side of the central doorway. No matching join could be seen to the north of the visible one though it may be obscured by the brickwork of the vault.

Matching the blocked window noted at ground level on the south gable, a similar blocking was noted on the north gable.

> There was an original mullioned window under the jump of string at first floor level. The head and top of the jambs are visible, the space occupied by window is built with fragments of stone down to a line 3'-3" above plinth, below which there is the original brickwork, but apparently the old sill remains, its bed being 3'-3" above plinth.
>
> The two 18th century windows in [sic] ground floor were practicable windows, the wood sills are left, & the jambs of frame to the left hand window.
>
> The window openings have been built up with brick on edge & the spaces in the thickness of wall are utilised as cupboards (D(CA)513).

With regards to the brickwork of the north gable, Gotch suggests that it was originally intended to be visible:

> The careful pointing with a struck joint of the bulk of brickwork, & the face of brickwork being flush with face of quoins are evidence in favour of the original brickwork having been meant to be visible. But there are certain small patches of irregular work about it, apparently of the same date, which must have been an eyesore (D(CA)513).

Brick, while ideal for John Dryden's Tudor frontage, would not have been suitable material for Edward's intended Renaissance influenced façade and so he rendered or stuccoed the whole of the elevation, altering as necessary and hiding any elements which would have thrown off the symmetry of the design. The current render is sadly featureless and plain but it is likely that the entirety would have been scored to give the impression of ashlar, as can be partly seen on a 19th century photograph (NRO ref: P/1636). This treatment is also noticeable on historic views of the east elevation.

It has been suggested that an external porch may have been built against the west elevation but no evidence to support this view was seen during this survey or has been presented in historic documentation or drawings.

General view of the west elevation Fig 18

Tapestry Room window Fig 19

Detail of the inside face of the Tapestry Room window showing the red paint scheme Fig 20

Detail of the panelled reveals Fig 21

Window to the Dining Room, blocked internally by panelling Fig 22

The central part of the west elevation showing the blocked cross-passage door and early 18th-century doorway, and the symmetrical arrangement of windows Fig 23

The southern Hall window with evidence for narrowing; also showing the misalignment of string courses Fig 24

The western ground floor window which is internally cut by the mezzanine floor in Cook's Room Fig 25

View of the chimney and parapet, looking south Fig 26

Detail of window to west range roof, blocked by the chimney Fig 27

View along the parapet, looking north Fig 28

1551-1584, including brick re-facing on earlier farmhouse

late 16th - early 17th century

*c*1710 alterations and blockings

19th century

chimneys removed

Chimney re-positioned c1710

parapet phasing uncertain

join noted by Gotch, 1906

South elevation re-faced c1710

former mullion window

sash blocked

sash blocked

floor level

window reduced?

former mullion window

sash rebuilt c1980s

window reduction (confirmed)

doorway, blocked c1710

join noted in cellar

doorway added c1710

approximate extent of former Wylkyns Farm, re-faced in brick

Wylkyns Farm and Tower House joined

extent of Tower House

0 5m

Scale 1:100 (A3)

The West elevation Fig 29

5.3. **South elevation** (Figs 30-37)

The south elevation is comprised of three main parts, the off-centre Tower and the two flanking blocks of unequal length (Figs 30-32, 37). Together these form a somewhat jarring but not out of place or charmless arrangement which was described by Pevsner as an uneasy combination of Tudor tower and Georgian sashes (Bailey *et al* 2013, 158). The elevation is nine or ten bays and measures *c*29.8m in length, with the main lengths of wall being *c*9.4m in height and *c*14.6m to the tower coping. The eastern part of the elevation is five bays, *c*14.2m in length and presents a regular arrangement of sash windows at ground and first floor, with small stone mullion windows partly hidden at basement level. This part of the elevation has a straight vertical join to the tower. The west part of the elevation is of the same layout with regular sashes and a single cellar window, but has an irregular join to the Tower.

The east and west parts of the elevation are faced with mid-orange iron and sandstone ashlar. The courses are arranged in alternating sizes from tile-like blocks to roughly square ones, and the pattern is repeated, with some variation, across both walls. A plinth course on each wall incorporates the basement windows and separates them from the ground floor level. The plinth courses are ashlar with the same approximate coursing style as the main wall face and are topped with simple moulded coping. During the course of restoration work, investigations revealed that the south elevation had “virtually no foundations” and the wall was underpinned and new foundations added to stabilise the wall (Building 1984, 48). The removal of panelling from the rooms revealed that the internal stonework was separating from the external, and the bonding timbers had rotted, resulting in the gradual subsidence of the inner wall. The inner wall was taken down and rebuilt, with new concrete ring beams and lintels added, as well as steel anchors to bond the internal and external walls.

Along the eastern wall there are six windows to the basement, the sills being dropped just below current garden level. They are, with one exception, two-light ovolo mullion windows with matching lintels and splayed sills. The windows are of matching proportions, measuring 1.2m x 0.8m, and have rectangular pattern glazing. In each window one of each pair of lights is side hung, some opening inwards and with external saddle bars, others opening outwards and with internal stanchions, and all with simple turnbuckle latches. The fixed lights have pairs of internal stanchions to which the glazing is tied. In all cases the lintels are comprised of two blocks joining at the mullion ovolo ridge. The sills are also of two parts but the joint is offset from the mullion base. The upper corner blocks are sometimes separate to the lintel pieces and sometimes part of them. In several instances the jambs are much wider than the lintels. It seems likely therefore that the windows were assembled from pieces which were fitted to match the design. A single-light window is set between the others, awkwardly placed at the corner of cellar Room C3, suggesting that it may be a reduced opening.

The regularity of the ground and first floor windows to the east of the tower is interrupted by the position of the internal walls and marked by a lead downpipe which descends from the base of the parapet. The downpipes are 1980s replacements of the 1710 ones and the hoppers have the inscription D 1982 MDCCX. Spiked coronets are placed at the pipe junctions. At the time of this survey, the original hoppers were stored in the tower cellar along with segments of worked stone such as moulded window elements and pieces derived from the former priory.

The sash windows are of matching proportions, the openings of each measuring *c*1.1m x 2.3m (Fig 36). The windows are set in lightly projecting plain stone surrounds with raised keystones, and simple moulded sills. The sashes at ground level are six over six, un-horned, with exposed sash boxes, and have iron sash fasteners. The glazing bars have light beading to the arrises and are tenoned and pegged into the rails and stiles. The three first floor windows to the Drawing Room have smaller panes, nine

over nine, with exposed sash boxes and ovolo-style glazing bars, and iron fasteners. The two windows to the Spenser's Room are also nine over nine but with rounded square profile glazing bars and with simple splayed horns similar to those recorded on the two sashes on the north elevation (Fig 235). It is probable that those windows with horns are replacements added during the 1980s restoration works. The ground and first floor level windows are separated by a string course which comprises a single course of ashlar raised slightly from the surrounding wall face.

Early sash windows were un-weighted and could open vertically or horizontally and were in use since at least the early 16th century (Innocent 1916). Pulley-hung sashes with weights and lines appear in the mid to late 17th century and the method may have been acquired from the Dutch. The woodwork of early examples were clumsy and the whole of the frame including weight groove were worked out from the solid (Innocent 1916, 261). Sash windows with weights first appear in great quantity at Chatsworth in 1676-80 and at Whitehall Palace in 1685 and the glass for sash windows was being advertised for sale in the London Gazette in 1686 (Clifton-Taylor 1987, 394). In the same period sash windows were used in Kensington Palace and Hampton Court, and this royal patronage set a fashion that swept into the Home Counties and beyond, becoming the standard domestic window type in higher status houses. As a precaution against fire, a statute was implemented in 1709 which required sash windows to be set back from the wall face by 4". This however applied only in London and was not carried out in the Counties; later developments saw the placement of the sash boxes within the wall.

During the 1980s restoration works the panelling was removed from the rooms and revealed a timber lintel embedded towards the top of the Drawing Room wall which has been suggested as being part of a former bay window such as those surviving on the west elevation. Any external evidence of such a feature was hidden or removed by Edward Dryden's 1710 re-facing of the south wall. A bay window would have spanned fully to the ground and obscured at least one of the cellar windows. No obvious evidence for its removal was noted in the cellar. The cellar windows to the east of the tower were likely added during Edward's alterations and the plinth course into which they are set presents a matching scheme of ashlar facing as the main part of the wall.

The east and west parts of the south elevation are surmounted by continuous parapets which stop at the tower and merge with the gable coping. The parapet bases are marked by slightly projecting chamfered string courses above which are two and three courses of ashlar. The parapet coping comprises a chamfered lower course and an upper capping course chamfered on the inside and chamfered and rolled on the outer side. Lead sheets form a walkway in the space between the parapets and the roof slopes and drain rainwater into the downpipes.

The west wall has only a single cellar window and this breaks through the plinth course with the lintel rising slightly over the moulded plinth coping. The window is an arched two-light cavetto mullion with spandrels (Fig 33). The lights have lattice glazing with the central upper quarry comprising a perforated lead plate. Lead flashing is set over the sills at the bottom of each light. Square-section stanchions are set behind the left-hand light. The east light is not visible within the cellar as half of the window and splay have been blocked.

The three ground floor sash windows of the western wall are of the same design as those of the east, having nine over nine panes. The westernmost window however has small curved horns while its neighbours do not, indicating that these are likely 1980s repairs. At first floor level the windows are nine over nine, again matching those at the east side of the elevation however the bottom half of the lower sashes are hidden behind window seats.

Among the Northamptonshire Archive's collection of Sir Henry Dryden's drawings and documents are a series relating to alterations, or proposed alterations to the sash windows of the Tapestry Room and Book Room (D(CA)470 1880, D(CA)473 1871). His proposed drawing, dated December 1880, is labelled *Proposed Sash-Frame for Tapestry Room*. The sash box is annotated "no weight here as only upper sash moves." A later drawing, dated 1881, is labelled *New sash frames, Tapestry Room*, and indicate that Henry carried out his alterations to the windows (D(CA)470 1881). The Book Room sash window drawing is signed E. Goffe and dated 1871.

The south-facing Tower elevation spans four floors and is externally faced in brick with a masonry core and stone quoins. The brickwork is rendered in a distinctive pale orange or cream colour which makes the tower a distinctive visual presence in the landscape, compared to the dull render of the west elevation which hides the house, particularly when in shade. The straight lines of the tower are negated by the contrasting ironstone mullions whose irregular nature further disrupts the attempted regularity of Edward Dryden's sash windows. The upper floor windows are central to the elevation while the larger ground floor window has been offset by the insertion of a door by Edward Dryden in 1710, an alteration which was noticed by Sir Henry and on his *c*1880 drawing of this feature he noted "This window has been shifted & altered when the 1710 doorway was inserted" (D(CA)472a Undated). As with all of the original tower windows it has cavetto moulded mullions (Fig 34). The jambs are also cavetto moulded and there are matching moulded bases to the chamfered sill and lintel. A hood mould with stops spans the top of the window. The mullions and lintel appear to present a matching set of stonework but the sill is more piecemeal, comprising several lengths of stone fitted to the required width. The window is set at an overly high level from the tower landing such that most visitors have to stand on tip toe to see over the sill and a clear view of the gardens is only possible from the stairs. The landing floor is at the correct level for the 1710 door at which date the window was moved so it is unclear why the window was not dropped to a more useable level. The hood mould certainly sits uncomfortably next to the pediment of the adjacent door.

The garden door, which allows passage between the garden and the tower landing, is set slightly below the top of the plinth coping and is reached by five steps which on the left side partly block the adjacent basement window that in turn interrupts the plinth. The door has a fairly plain but elegant stone surround with a broken segmental pediment which is linked by a decorative scroll-like console keyblock, to the top of the door opening. The door is oak, with eight fielded panels and ogee-moulded rails and mullion. A decorative handle (likely 18th century) is placed centrally to the lock rail and internally there is a large iron rim lock with external escutcheon (Fig 233). Iron sliding bolts with decorative handles are installed at the top and bottom of the door. The door swings on 18th-century tapered fleur-de-lis strap hinges.

The ground and first floor levels are separated by a simple stone string course which marks the floor / ceiling level. Another string course spans below the second floor level and matches the parapet coping. The first floor window sits low within the panel created by the string courses and it is probable that a window has been blocked up in the space above the current one. The window has arched lights with cavetto moulded mullions and recessed spandrels. The window is recessed within the chamfered frame and crowned by a hood mould with stops. The three lights are fixed, with lattice glazing tied to pairs of stanchions. The window is set at the edge of the thick wall and has deep splayed cheeks with a wide sill. The arched head and lintel were fully replaced during the 1980s conservation work.

The second and third floor windows which light the Landmark Trust apartment are of the same design as the first floor window but on both windows the lower part of the central light is side hung (Fig 36). The casements have iron frames with horizontal saddle bars on the lower window and vertical stanchions on the upper window. Both

windows have turnbuckle latches and the upper also has a modern stay. During the 1980s repairs to the Tower windows it was found that they are built of clunch “the name given to chalk used for building, and an unusual stone to use for external architectural detail since it is very soft. It probably came from Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire, and is one of seven different stones used in the building of Canons Ashby” (Haslam 1985).

The tower has a tall parapet, *c*1.7m from string course to coping, to allow safe movement on the tower platform. The string course and parapet coping are of the same design as that on the adjacent east and west blocks as well as that recorded on the north and west elevations.

The south elevation, looking north Fig 30

The western extent of the south elevation Fig 31

The eastern extent of the south elevation Fig 32

Cavetto mullion cellar window Fig 33

The ground floor tower window Fig 34

Upper storey tower window Fig 35

Example of the sash windows Fig 36

Scale 1:125 (A3)

The south elevation Fig 37

5.4. The East elevation and passageway (Figs 38-49)

Of the four main elevations this one provided the greatest challenge to interpretation and presented more complexity than a cursory examination might reveal. The elevation is the least harmonious one with little attempt at unity, this compounded by the off-centre door to the passageway and the external privy block and adjoining outbuilding (Figs 38, 48). At the distal ends of the elevation are the end gables of the south and north ranges and between is the low undulating roof of the east range. Despite the absence of any unity or overarching style the north and east elevations, when viewed from the eastern road, combine to provide one of the most visually pleasing views of the house.

The south gable is 7m in width and rises *c*13m to the ridge (Fig 41). The primary coursing of the south gable wall, similar to that noted on the south elevation ashlar, is arranged in graduated courses of variable thickness with courses of thin tile-like stones set between courses of increasing size. The stones of the larger courses are *c*160mm in height and of variable width, *c*230-350mm in width. The stones forming the thinnest courses were 50-60mm in height and 160-240mm in width. The elevation was re-mortared during the 1980s restorations. This style of coursing appears to have been common throughout the south and west of Northamptonshire and numerous historic buildings can be found displaying this method of construction, in many cases also being further enhanced by the use of contrasting polychrome stones.

Just below the ridge is a roughly square two-light ovolo mullion window measuring 1.2m width and 1.1m in height. An ovolo and hollow hood mould spans over window. The hood mould consists of two stones and a mason's mark, resembling a letter B or R is carved on the underside of the larger stone. As will be described herein, many of the windows on this elevation carry the same mark on the hood moulds. The lights are fixed, with small scale lattice glazing and the glazing is secured by three iron saddle bars set between the jambs and mullions. Externally the window appears to be of a uniform design with matching mullions, lintel and sill. Internally however the sill and lintel blocks are clearly taken from a different window which was not ovolo moulded. Some faint curvilinear scratches, possible graffiti, can be seen on the south internal jamb. A modern concrete lintel has been placed over the window internally. This window, or at least its glazing, was removed during the 1980s restoration work in order to allow for the steelwork of the Drawing Room ceiling support lattice to be lifted and moved into position (Building 1984, 48). The internal stonework of the gable above the window was rebuilt during the conservation work and an anomalous red coloured stone was placed at the centre of the rebuild. Externally this work is not visible. To each side of the window, on the inner face of the wall, are pockets for a former roof arrangement.

The stone frames of two former windows are visible in this wall, their lintels *c*1.6m below the sill of the gable window (Fig 42). The two windows are set at a distance of 2.2m between their inner jambs. Both windows are blocked in stone whose coursing is a match for the surrounding stonework of the wall face. Set centrally to the two windows and *c*1.7m below them are six anomalous stone blocks set three over three. It is probable that an oriel window was formerly built onto this gable and the large blocks mark its base. An oriel window remains on the north gable and the central window is flanked by two narrow windows in the adjacent wall and these are of similar proportions to the blocked ones on the south gable. The blocking of the oriel is well done such that it is not obvious though there is a subtle difference in coursing between the two blocked windows and down to the oriel base.

At ground level there is a substantial timber lintel exposed, with quoin lined joins at each end. The area between the joins has been infilled in stone. The lower and left part of the blocking was done with substantial ironstone blocks, while the remainder was carried out using smaller stones arranged in courses of variable size, matching the

coursing style of the surrounding wall. It is unclear why the blocking is in two styles unless perhaps the blocking failed and was repaired with larger stones. The opening was contemporary with or at least functional at the same time as the plinth course, as the moulded plinth stops at each vertical join and the gap was later blocked in stones with no attempt to match. As evident at Gayton Manor House (mid 16th century, HE 2018b) wide projecting bays occupying almost the full width of a gable were a feature of local construction since at least the mid 16th century. The most likely date for the removal of this gable is the 1710 alterations by Edward Dryden during which the Painted Parlour was given its present decorative scheme and the floor level across the south range was lowered.

The bottom right corner of the gable elevation is hidden by a small, single-storey, late 19th / early 20th-century privy. The line of the privy roof is extended northward to join to a projecting two storey block which was described by Henry Dryden as *Privy* and *Water Closet* (D(CA)472 1872a and b). Brick paving is installed in the gap between the two and a blocked window formerly opened to the cellar (C1). A flat arch spans over the brick paving and at the back of the short passage is a beam with defunct joist slots. Above the level of the passage, and largely hidden by vegetation is a probable former sash with simple stone surround and projecting keystone. The east jamb is truncated by the adjacent and later privy block. The window has a wooden frame and is two-lights with the bottom half of the left hand light being side-hung.

Adjacent to the south gable and in the corner between the east range and the two-storey privy block the room beyond has been awkwardly extended outward in what is effectively a large dormer whose base marks the eaves or wall plate of the former east range roof (Fig 43). The dormer has a flat roof of lead sheets and is faced with deep orange / brown ashlar. There is a tall four-light wooden framed window with exposed timber lintel, which spans from the base of the dormer to the eaves. The lights have rectangular pattern glazing and the lower left light is side hung. It has two turnbuckle latches and an upright spiral-tail stay. The window has internal shutters.

The two-storey privy block is 3.5m wide and projects 1.9m from the main wall face. At ground level it is subdivided into two rooms and is a single room at first floor, with access to the current house Office, formerly *Dressing Room*. The block is stone-built with dressed quoins and the primary stonework is better dressed than the shaped rubble of the south gable and the east range. The block has an unusual double-hip tile roof arrangement, one larger than the other, with a central valley draining to a projecting lead spout and with modern drains wrapping around the eaves and with downpipes on the north wall. The south ground floor room is accessed through the south wall. The internal room measurement is 1.8m x 1.0m and the room has a brick floor and ceiled by a brick vault, with a timber beam spanning below the vault at the rear wall. The brickwork of the vault appears to be 19th century with lime mortar between the bricks. The room is lit by a single light window with mismatched stone surround and with diamond pattern lead glazing. The adjacent room is a little larger and is accessed through a low brick arched door.

Sir Henry's plan and section of this block show that a buried drain entered from the northern side and on entering the building passed through an arch into a space below the southern room and from there passed through the east range wall and into the brew house. The first floor toilet connected to a vertical pipe which connected to the subterranean ones below.

There are two windows to the first floor room, one about double the size of the other. The larger is side hung with lattice glazing in a wooden frame and a swivel latch and an off-centre vertical bar. The smaller window has a wood frame with scars on the internal jambs suggest that it formerly had shutters. The glazing bars are iron and the window has a turnbuckle latch and a central stanchion. A void is shown between the

ceiling of the ground floor privy and the floor of the upper room. The section also shows a ventilating shaft, no longer *in situ*, which was made in 1872 and whose flue descended through the north wall into the north ground floor room. The plan notes that the low arched door into the north room was also made in 1872.

The east range is two-storey block, *c*16.3m long by *c*6.3m wide connecting to the north and south ranges and completing the quadrangle which forms the courtyard. The east range is much lower and humbler than the surrounding blocks, having more in common with the Northamptonshire post-medieval vernacular building tradition than the higher status manorial architecture. A large part of the east elevation is obscured by the two privy blocks and there isn't a clear join to the east-facing gable elevation of the south range with coursing continuing uninterrupted between the two parts of the building and suggesting a possible re-facing of the south end of the east range. The visible part of the elevation presents mixed fenestration comprising a central doorway with passage to the courtyard, with a stone mullion window to the north and a wooden cross-window to the south. At first floor there is a roughly central wooden casement and another of similar size to the north. A clear join separates the north edge of the east range from the gable elevation of the north range.

The cross-window has an exposed timber lintel and the wooden frame is slightly rebated to the wall face. The transom is set towards the upper half of the window. The transom and mullions are square-section with light beading to the internal edges. The frame elements are tenoned and pegged together. The four lights are fixed, with lattice glazing. Iron pintles for former external shutters remain in the jambs. These shutters can be seen in a 19th-century photograph of the house (DR/25/54/51). Cross-windows generally appeared in the mid 17th century and by the end of that century had become the standard window type in larger townhouses and farmhouses, remaining popular until *c*1740 (Hall 2011, 74).

The ground floor window to the former *Water House*, now Pump Room, is a two-light ovolo mullion window. Although the sill and lintel match the ovolo mullion and jambs externally, on the inner side they have square mullion and jamb seats. The lights are fixed, with lattice glazing and internal saddle bars and pairs of stanchions. A mason's mark *B* is visible on the underside of the hood mould and others may be present but were obscured by vegetation. It was noted by Sir Henry that a horizontal line was set above and to the right of the Water House window (externally) and this line is level with the top of the coping of the Norwell (D(CA)475 1880). It was not possible to see this line during this survey due to vegetation on the elevation.

The first floor casements have moulded sills, largely obscured by vegetation, and exposed timber lintels directly on the wall plate. Both lights of the southern window have lattice glazing with internal saddle bars and the left hand light is side-hung with two turnbuckle latches and a simple stay. Inside there are simple wooden shutters which when closed are held in place by a rotating bar. The northern window has rectangular glazing and internal saddle bars. The left hand casement has two turnbuckle latches and a simple stay with hooked tail. Internally there are simple wooden shutters.

The ground floor passageway is off-centre to the east range but is central to the length of exposed wall between the privy block and the join with the north range. It is also aligned with the doorway between the Pebble Court and Hall, as well as the blocked former doorway to the Green Court. The doorway has a four-centred arch head with a chamfered edge which is continued down the jambs to the ground (Fig 44). The arch is formed of two blocks which meet at the centre. The stone surround displays a variety of ephemeral scratches, some possibly deliberate and others a results of weathering and impact. A deliberate cluster of diagonal lines, possibly a crude pentangle or warding mark, is located roughly mid-way up on the left jamb, and two possible Marian

Masons marks, inverted Ws (also referred to as Marian, Ave Marie or Virgo Virginum), can be seen on the left arch though these may perhaps be tool marks. Other marks may also be present on the door but are faint and require directional lighting to view. A cobbled surface of grey blue stones edged with red stones is set into the ground in front of the door. Above the door is an electric light set into a lantern. While the current light is obviously a modern one, historic views of the east range do not show an earlier precedent for a light in this location.

The door is substantially built with planks set between oak stile posts and braced with horizontal beams and with a curved brace roughly matching the top of the curved door (Fig 60). The brace members are tenoned and bolted into the stiles and the planks are bolted to each of the braces. Above the doorway, visible from within the passage is a substantial oak lintel. The door is hung on a pair of pintles embedded in the wall behind the door surround. The gudgeons comprise iron straps attached to the planks and they wrap around the pintles to be bolted to the stile. The door has a circular wooden knob and wooden latch which engages with a shaped iron fastener on the right hand jamb. A drawbeam is installed behind the door and slides out from a slot built into the wall at the south side of the door, with a shorter slot in the opposing side of the door. Adjacent to the door, on its northern side, is a wooden handled bell pull which connects to a bell located in the corner of the passageway. The handle is hung from a tall iron bar pivoted on a plate attached to the wall.

Immediately above the door arch is a line of tiles which extend from the left jamb and fully span the width of the passageway, stopping at a vertical join in the wall which rises from the plinth course and can be traced to the eaves. Viewed from within the passageway the door is clearly a reduction of an earlier opening, bringing the north side inward. The opposing passageway opening to the Pebble Court demonstrates the width of the original opening. The width of the passageway corresponds with the external vertical join. The join marks a noticeable change in the wall's fabric. To the north of the join the coursing resembles that of the south gable in which the courses are graduated with tile-like stones set between larger blocks. The thinner blocks are approximately 110-230mm in length and 50mm in width, and the largest blocks are 270-470mm in length and *c*200mm wide. The stones are set in pale friable sandy mortar. The remainder of the wall, on the south side of the join, has more uniform coursing, though with some graduation, with roughly shaped blocks of a generally consistent size with occasional courses of larger stones. The stones vary between 40-140mm in thickness and are 100-250mm in length and are set within mid-orange brown, sandy mortar, re-pointed in several areas. The current doorway appears too narrow to accommodate a cart while the earlier, wider arrangement may have allowed entrance to a small cart.

When the east range is viewed in section it becomes apparent that there is a gap between the passageway ceiling and the floor of the room above and this is much deeper than the floor thickness in either the Water House or the Brew House. The reason for this discrepancy was not apparent.

The north gable is 7m in width and *c*12.8m from ground to the ridge. As with the south gable, the outer pitch coping is offset to accommodate the parapet which spans the north elevation. Set within the gable apex is a recessed square blocking with moulded stone surround which presumably formerly allowed light into the roof space beyond. This feature is shown as blocked on 19th-century views of the house. The most prominent feature of the gable is the first floor oriel window to the Oriel Room (formerly *Sir Robert's Room*). The oriel is 2.3m in width and spans *c*6m from the base to the top of the sloped crown which abuts the blocked window to the roof. The moulded base rests on three stone blocks and projects *c*0.5m from the wall face. Due to vegetation coverage it was not possible to see any masons marks on the stones. The oriel skirting is c1m in height and is brick-built with stone quoins. The window is eight lights, four

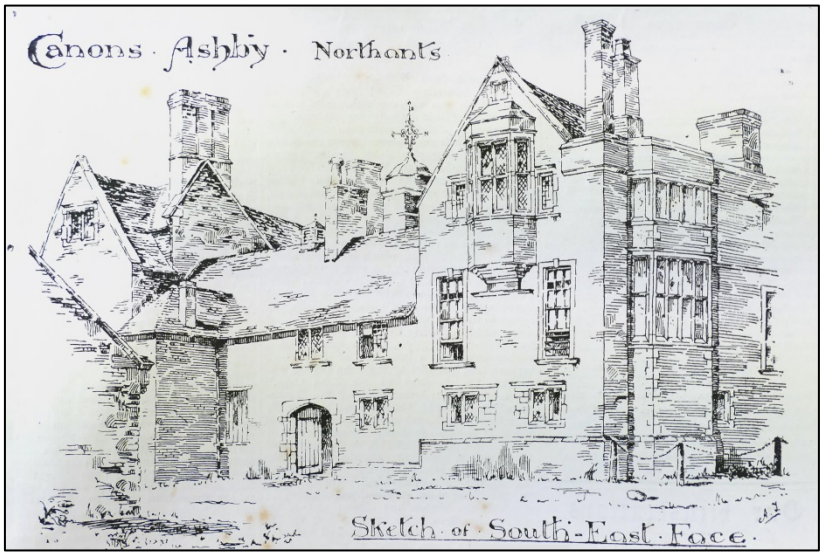
over four, with four lights facing forward, flanked by pairs in the oriel splay, of which the lower lights are side hung with quadrant stays (Fig 234). The mullions, transom and window heads are ovolo moulded and the transom is slightly raised off-centre. The oriel is flanked by a pair of lights which are held within a shared sill and utilise the external jambs of the oriel. Unlike the lattice glazing of the oriel, the flanking windows have rectangular glazing, four over nine. No masons marks were visible on the oriel or the flanking lights. Above the oriel is a short span of brickwork crowned by pitched stone. A circular graffiti scored with criss-crossing diagonal lines is carved onto the internal window sill.

Below the oriel is a three-light ovolo mullion window with hood mould. Masons marks in the shape of B were noted on each of the three blocks forming the hood mould and a single W or Marian mark was noted (Figs 46, 47). This window was blocked in *c*1710 to allow for the insertion of two sash windows to the Sitting Room which was enlarged and panelled at that time. These sashes remained open until the early 20th century when they were blocked and the mullion window re-opened. Below are two ovolo mullion windows on which one light of each window is blocked in stone. Both of these windows have hood moulds with masons marks.

Irregular areas of brickwork can be seen adjacent to the quoins at the sides of the gable and two triangles of brickwork are also located below the oriel window, marking the edges of the former sash windows. It seems likely that this gable was originally faced in brick but was later re-faced in stone. The lower part of the elevation had been faced in stone prior to the re-opening of the first floor mullion window and the brickwork is clearly visible adjacent to the sash windows on the historic photograph DR/25/54/51. The area above the sash windows and up to the parapet was likewise faced in stone while the brickwork of the gable and the skirting of the oriel were rendered and this material remained in place until the 1980s. It seems likely therefore that the elevation was partly faced in stone when the sash windows were inserted and this is also evident on the oriel window on which the brickwork was rendered and scored to resemble ashlar. The extent of stone facing was increased by the blocking of the sash windows in the early 20th century.

A wooden slatted louver was formerly located on the roof ridge adjacent to the chimney and can be seen on early photographs of the house. A brick-built single flue chimney was formerly located at the northern corner of the north gable and served a corner fireplace in the upper floor room.

The north and east elevations, looking south-west Fig 38



Sketch of the east elevation, 1893. Note missing louver and chimney, and former sash windows (ZA464) Fig 39

Photograph of the east range by J. A. Gotch, *c*1892 (D(CA)475) Fig 40

The south gable showing blocked bay window and oriel Fig 41

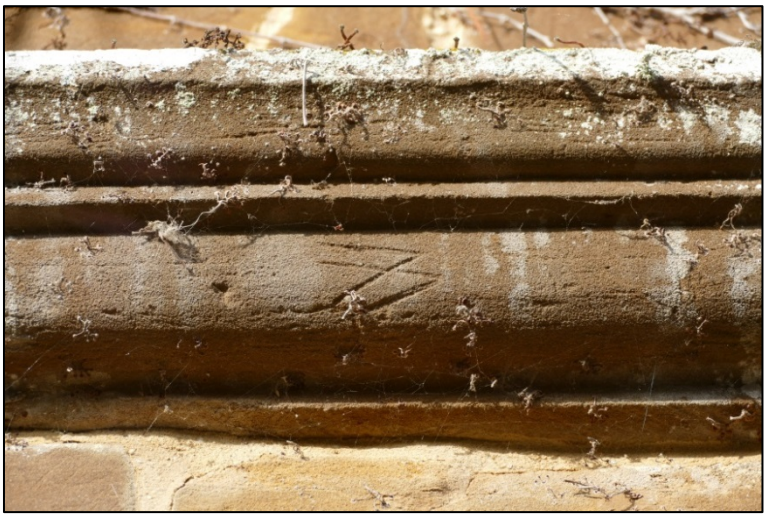
Detail of the blocked oriel window Fig 42

The privy and adjacent dormer Fig 43

The passageway door. Note vertical and horizontal joins and change in fabric Fig 44

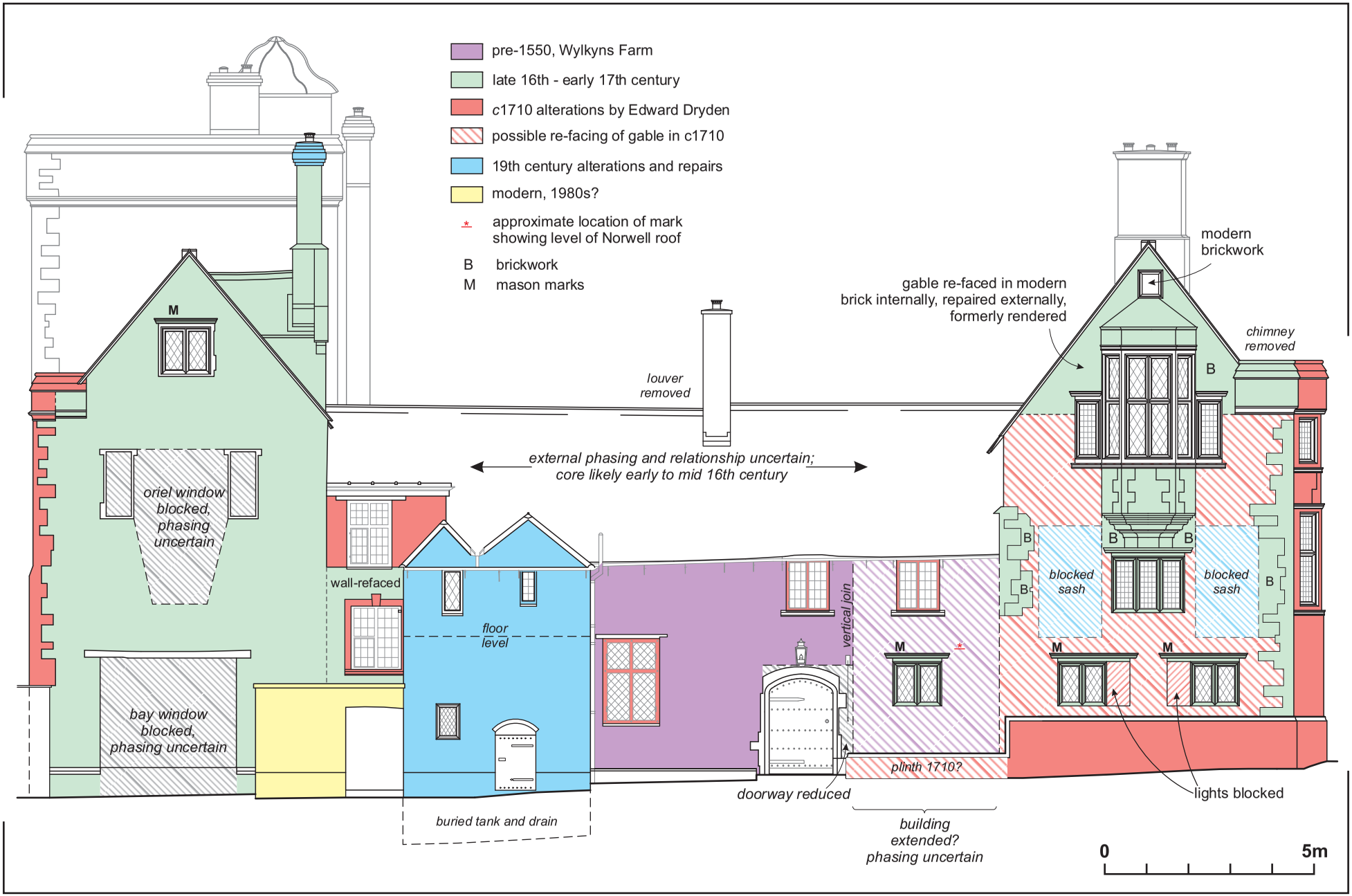
Mullion window with blocked light Fig 45

Detail of Masons mark on window lintel Fig 46



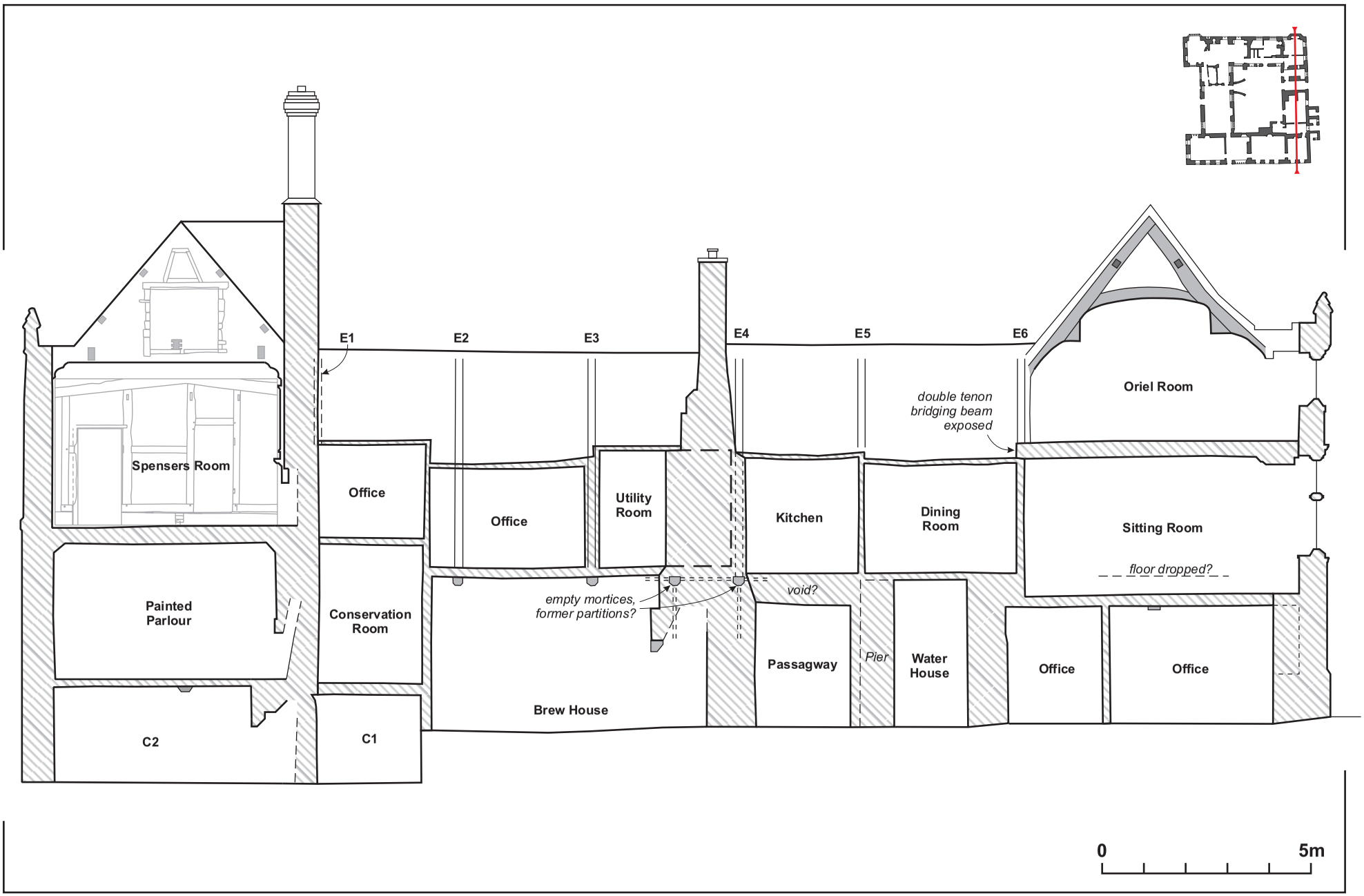
Detail of Marian or Masons mark on window lintel Fig 47

Scale 1:125 (A4)



Eastern elevation Fig 48

Scale 1:125 (A4)



Eastern longitudinal section

Fig 49

6 THE COURTYARD ELEVATIONS

6.1. North elevation (Figs 50-56)

The north courtyard elevation presents a mix of windows, blocking and changes of fabric whose interpretation, in partnership with the main north-facing elevation, is vital towards understanding the construction and development of the house (Figs 50, 56). It is four bays, 11.6m wide and 7.5m to the eaves. The elevation can be considered in two parts, each part separated by a full height vertical and staggered join marked by a sturdy buttress.

The primary coursing of the west part of the elevation comprises shaped ironstone rubble of variable size and the coursing is arranged by block size. The eastern part of the wall is composed of shaped square and rectangular ironstone blocks arranged in courses of different sizes. At the base of the wall, between the east range wall and the buttress, is a slightly projecting plinth course *c*0.8m tall with chamfered coping stones. The plinth is interrupted by the doorway and the coping drops to the ground at each side of the door.

Central to the eastern part of the elevation is a four-centred arched door with recessed flat spandrels (Fig 51). The jambs have hollow and roll moulding which is continued above the spandrels. Over the doorway is a cyma hood mould with lead flashing, and above the hood mould is a shouldered relieving arch. Externally the door is matched to the surround with the upper fields curving to the door head. Internally the door is covered by planks nailed to the bracing. The door swings on plain L-hinges, perhaps dating to the 18th or early 19th century. The marks of previous hinge arrangements can be seen on the planks, including an L-hinge mark spanning over two planks which would have required the door to swing in the opposite direction. Sliding bolts are installed at the top and bottom of the door and there is a rim lock. The wooden lintel and jambs of the frame are pegged together.

To the left side of the door is a trefoil stone window, *c*0.55mm in diameter, with chamfered tracery, and with a matching design picked out by the lead glazing (Fig 51). The window has a hollow and rolled surround and the whole of the window, including tracery is carved from a single square limestone block. Over the door is an ironstone lintel. A drawing was produced of this element in 1869, on which is noted “probably from a gable of the church” (D(CA)472 1869). Both the doorway and this lintel are probably mid 19th-century additions by Sir Henry Dryden.

To each side of the doorway are two-light wood-mullion windows with exposed timber lintels. The lights are fixed, with lattice glazing and internal saddle bars, and the mullions are square-profile with beading at the edges. The wooden frame is tenoned and pegged. The eastern window awkwardly abuts the wall of the east range which covers the end of the lintel. The stonework around the west window has been rebuilt, indicating the alteration or insertion of the window. The stonework above the lintel respects the surrounding coursing but appears to have been reset simultaneously with the stonework at the sides. The window lintel abuts the vertical join adjacent to the buttress. Viewed from inside the north range passageway, there are vertical joins aligned with the window jambs and these span from the window sills to the floor. These joins are not visible externally due to the plinth course. It is unclear if the current window positions were formerly doorways, or windows in which the window splays were dropped to the ground.

At first floor level there are three cross-windows of matching proportions, in which the transom and mullions are flat externally, with internal chamfered moulding, and the window jambs are likewise chamfered (Fig 235). The lights have lattice glazing with saddle bars and the wooden frames are tenoned and pegged. The windows have fixed lights except the eastern window which has one casement light with turnbuckle latch

and simple hooked stay. The east window, as noted on the ground floor window, is located awkwardly close to the wall and eaves of the east wall. Prior to the 1980s restoration works the middle window was blocked as can be seen on a photograph of this period (CANT47BLK). It was noted on a sketched drawing by Sir Henry Dryden, that the original windows were "taken out 1863, two fresh frames put in and one bricked up. (D(CA)472b Undated)" The outline of a blocked former window can be seen adjacent to and below the middle window which in turn was blocked by Sir Henry in 1863 (Figs 54, 56). The blocked window's former lintel, also visible in outline, appears to have remained *in situ* into the 1980s and is visible in restoration photographs. It is probable that the lintel was rotted and subsequently removed. As will be discussed further in this report the blocked window's lintel and sill would not have been able to function with the current floor and ceiling levels of the north range. The blocked window's sill is level with a course of larger stone that spans from the east range wall and stops at a change of fabric to the left of the window. This area of different coursing is bounded by the vertical join at the west, by the sill of the window above and by the window below, with an irregular join to the stonework around the blocked first floor window. The fabric here comprises twelve courses of closely set elongated tile-like stones.

At second floor level there are three windows in the east part of the elevation, these aligning with the underlying windows. The eastern and central windows are of matching proportions and comprise two-light wood-mullion windows with tenoned and pegged frame, and with diamond-pattern glazing and internal saddle bars (Fig 235). The mullion and jambs are square-profile with ovolo moulded inside edges. Nail holes on these suggest that the window was formerly blocked with planks. Both lights of the eastern window are fixed while the middle window has one casement light with turnbuckle latch and simple iron stay. The bottom rail has a rounded cut-away to accommodate the stay. The wooden lintels are hidden by the eaves and form part of the wall plate. The windows light a corridor which leads from the north range stair to the Oriel Room and they are positioned oddly low to the corridor height such that one must kneel to view through them.

The eaves line is interrupted and raised to accommodate an anomalous stone window that lights the north range stair landing. This is a two-light window with four-centred arch headers and recessed spandrels (Fig 234). The lights are fixed, with lattice glazing and internal stanchions. The mullion, jambs and arches are chamfer moulded. Whilst the mullion and window heads appear to match, the sill is clearly a composite of recycled window elements cut to fit the opening. The external surround has a chamfer which continues around the sill, partly hidden by a short length of drain pipe. It is evident that rather than just fitting any available window parts into a space where one was required, an effort was made to form a whole window with full surround. If the arched window head were removed and a flat lintel added, the main eaves line could have been retained with no need to raise the eaves for this short span.

A buttress stands adjacent to the join which separates John Dryden's H-shaped house from Erasmus's extension. It is rectangular in plan, 1.2m wide, projects 0.9m from the wall and stands to a height of 7.5m. It has a basal plinth which is stepped at mid-height and topped with splayed stone coping. The sides are flat while the south face is stepped at mid height, rises and tapers to meet the wall. The step and taper have angled coping stones. The buttress is primarily built of ironstone, displaying the characteristic rust colour and pitted texture of this material. It is unclear to what extent the buttress is keyed into the wall.

To the west of the buttress is a four-light ovolo mullion window to the kitchen. The edges of the window surround are recessed and chamfered. The moulded stones which make up the frame and mullions are a mixture of stone types and display variable erosion and it is uncertain if the window was formed from recycled elements or

if its appearance is the result of ad-hoc repairs and replacement. The lights are fixed with lattice glazing and square-section stanchions. Immediately to the left of the window the wall is cut back to avoid blocking part of the adjacent window of the west range (Fig 52). The stonework beneath the window displays an irregular sequence of patch repairs and repointing.

The outline of a blocked window is visible at first floor level. The bottom, top, and right side of the window are fairly clear but the right side of the block is less obvious and the former window may have spanned almost to the join with the west wall. The blocking was carried out in the familiar pattern of variable coursing size similar to that of the eastern part of the wall and which can also be seen on the east range and on the west courtyard elevation where a similar fabric marks the position of a former external chimney.

At second floor level there is a three-light ovolo mullion window with chamfered window surround (Fig 234). The window elements are a mix of stone types with variable weathering, indicating either recycling during construction or repair and replacement. Two of the lights are fixed and one is an inward opening casement with an iron frame, external stanchions and internal vertical saddle bars. It has a decorative turnbuckle latch, probably 17th-century in date. The other lights are fixed with internal stanchions to which the glazing is tied. A misalignment of the eaves levels between the north and west ranges is particularly evident in this corner of the courtyard (Fig 53).

The north courtyard elevation stands higher than the adjacent east range whose eaves begin at first floor level with the ridge rising to just over the north elevation eaves. The angle formed above the east range roof pitch is sealed by laths on studs and rendered, while on the east side of the roof, bricks were laid on a rafter to provide the impression of solid walling (Fig 55).

The north courtyard elevation Fig 50

The inserted doorway and window Fig 51

The arrangement of windows at the junction of the north and west ranges Fig 52

The misaligned eaves level between the north and west ranges Fig 53

Blocked window and change in fabric Fig 54

The awkward position of the windows to the east elevation; note area of render sealing the Oriel Room Fig 55

Scale 1:50 (A3)

The north courtyard elevation Fig 56

6.2. East elevation (Figs 57-62)

The east elevation is 13.2m in width and rises *c*5m to the eaves. It is the most plain of the elevations presenting a fairly uniform and consistent coursing of shaped sand and ironstone rubble interspersed between occasional larger bands (Fig 57). The primary stones are an average 180-240mm long and 60-100mm wide, with twelve courses in 1m height.

At the west side of the wall is a door to the former Wash House (Fig 58). It has an exposed timber lintel, chamfered with runout stops and the wooden frame is tenoned and pegged. The door is plank and braced with an 18th or 19th-century thumb latch. A short threshold of bricks is set within the cobbled courtyard surface in front of the door and a downpipe drops to a drain.

The passageway opening is 1.8m wide and *c*2.2m in height and has a substantial oak lintel elaborately carved to produce a slightly pointed upper edge and shouldered ends (Fig 59). It is recessed and squared within the opening and has a cranked underside face with chamfered edges. Square post slots are cut into the edges of the lintel. No matching slots for posts can be seen on the passageway floor and no obvious installation points for a door frame or door furniture is visible on the stonework or lintel. The opening jambs are lined with quoins and one of these stones has an unusual rectangular cut away into which has been inserted a darker stone deliberately cut to fit.

A bell wire runner, comprising fixing plate with pivot, is installed on the wall above and to the left of the passageway lintel. The cable would have passed through the corner of the easternmost north corridor window where another wire runner is located.

The door to the former Brewhouse is 1.1m wide and 2.4m tall and has an exposed oak lintel which is chamfered with ogee stops. A levelling tile can be seen under the left side of the lintel. The wooden door casing is tenoned and pegged and faced with thin stops. An iron ring is fixed at the top of the right jamb. The doorway has a timber threshold which is much more eroded than the door itself. A central socket in the threshold timber is likely to be a socket for a square section bolt placed at the junction of a doorway made of two narrow leaves, such as that to the external stair only 3m away. In addition to the bolt socket, there are also two square mortice-like sockets, probably for removable bars to reinforce the door and prevent unauthorised access to the Brewhouse and the alcohol within. The door is formed of planks with beaded edges and has five horizontal bracing bars internally. It is swung on crude iron strap hinges with spearhead ends. The door has an 18th or 19th-century thumb latch of the same style as that on the water house door. The door has a rim lock and a sliding bolt.

At first floor level is a fixed four-light wood-mullion window with exposed timber lintel (Figs 62, 235). The wooden window casing is tenoned and pegged, and the mullions are square profile with ovolo moulding on the interior edges. The lights have rectangular lead glazing, much smaller on the two inner lights and with several repairs on all of the lights. Horizontal saddle bars are set within each light. Due to the roof pitch the window is set unusually low so that its sill marks the floor level of the corridor beyond.

A particularly unusual feature of the elevation are the exposed tie beams of two of the principal trusses, one of these being partly hidden under an overhanging corridor at first floor level (Fig 65). The northern one also shows the remains of a mortice for a vertical timber, likely for the tenoned foot of a cruck timber (Fig 61). As will be discussed further in this report, these timbers became exposed by a later remodelling of this wall, likely during the re-building the wall from cob to stone. Relating to this, it was noted that the wall displays a slight irregular bowing which is particularly noticeable at its northern end where the wall appears to curve inward to avoid blocking the windows of the north range.

The eastern elevation Fig 57

The Water House door; note possible angling of the wall to accommodate adjacent window Fig 58

The passageway and lintel Fig 59

The reduced eastern side of the passageway Fig 60

The exposed end of a tie beam with footing for a raised cruck, Truss E2 Fig 61

The first floor window Fig 62

6.3. South elevation (Figs 63-71)

6.3.1. The external stair turret

The external stair turret is two and half storeys, 3.1m in width, projecting 2.5m from the north range and is 6.3m from the ground to the eaves (Fig 66). The lower part of the turret is faced in ashlar, generally regular but with some randomisation to accommodate the large quoins, a doorway and a window. The ashlar has an irregular transition to rubble coursing which is continued to the eaves to either side of the quoins. The rubble coursing of the south wall of the turret is stopped short of the eaves by the ashlar-like stone surround of the top window. At the top of the turret is an awkwardly inserted angled wall which joins the turret to the east range wall and allows for passage between the stair landing and the inserted doorway to the current house office, formerly Dressing Room. This feature is also faced with ashlar and is supported over a window beam. The ashlar work of this element and the stair turret is reminiscent of that seen on the main east elevation where it forms a dormer window to the office / dressing room. As noted in Section 6.2 the end of a tie beam projects through the wall and is visible below the angled projection.

The stair turret doorway has a stone surround matching and blending in with the ashlar wall. It has a four-centred arch head comprised of two matching sandstone blocks joined at the centre. The head and jambs have chamfered edges which end at pyramid stops just above ground level. At mid-height the jambs are slightly stepped. A compass-drawn graffiti was noted on the right jamb (Fig 67). The petals were faintly visible but due to erosion parts of the design have become indistinct. Other scratches can be seen around the jambs but no obvious patterns or designs were discernible. A compass drawn circle is also visible on the left door head chamfer. The central dimple is visible but no internal lines are present. The left arch block is smooth with relatively minimal weathering and lichen coverage; the right arch block in contrast displays numerous marks from its carving and the surface is pitted and eroded.

Instead of a single door, there are two leaves, both swinging inwards and with a threshold timber resembling that noted at the Brewhouse entrance. Both have simple fielded panels, the upper being curved to match the doorway shape. The left door has an 18th-century upright latch and handle. It is located too close to the door joins and when opening the door it is common to catch one's hand and knuckles on the edge of the other door. Latches of the same design are also present on the Water House and Brewhouse doors.

Above and to the right of the door is a two-light wood-framed window with fixed lattice glazed lights and an exposed timber lintel. The lights each have three saddle bars and pairs of square-profile stanchions. The central mullion is square-profile with beading to the inside edges. The frame is tenoned and pegged. The window sits awkwardly close to the top of the doorway such that the lead flashing is folded over the top of the right hand arch block. Viewed from inside, a reused timber with defunct joint slots is utilised as both a sill for the window and a lintel over the door. Nail marks on the interior face of the frame and mullion suggest that the window was formerly boarded up.

At the top of the stair turret is a wood-framed window in which part of the left light is an iron-framed casement with external pintle and gudgeon hinges. The frame and mullion are square-profile with internal beaded edges. The lights have rectangular glazing with saddle bars and pairs of stanchions, and the casement has a circular latch and a simple stay. At the ends of the internal lintel are two pintles, perhaps for internal shutters. No matching pintles are present at the bottom of the window.

A window is blocked at mid-height on the west side of the stair turret. The outline of the blocking spans to the edge of the join with the adjacent chimney. The window splays and sill survive internally and the stone blocking is rendered. An exposed wooden lintel

spans the opening and has two rectangular joist slots which likely relate to a former stair arrangement.

The current stair is U-plan with central steps and no landing until first floor where another step rises the short distance to the Drawing Room. The stair is perhaps 19th century (or 20th century with period detailing) with simple square-section balusters and slightly pyramidal handrails, lightly moulded at the edges. The newel posts are simple square-section posts capped with flat topped finials with light moulding. A small cupboard is built under the stair. The treads are covered with modern surfacing with anti-slip nosings. The stair is clearly a replacement for an earlier arrangement for which lengths of timber with defunct slots remain *in situ* at intervals up the turret walls. At the bottom of the stair, adjacent to the door is an elevated alcove with the sill approximately mid-height to the door. A short flight of stone steps in the south-east corner of the turret leads down the cellar door. The doorway has an oak lintel and another beam is located at an angle above the lintel, with another above this one spanning the south wall and has defunct slots relating to the earlier stair.

6.3.2. The south chimney

This chimney, which primarily serves the fireplaces in the Drawing Room and Henry Dryden's Book Room also connects to the former Dairy in the cellar (Room C3) and when viewed in plan is noticeably offset from those fireplaces, suggesting that it post-dates the adjacent stairwell. At its base it is 2.8m in width and retains this width to just above the eaves where it begins to taper to its full height of *c*17.5m. The chimney is primarily built of coursed, mixed ironstone rubble with quoins. The coursing is arranged into bands of alternating sized stone blocks. At the base is a plinth course with roll and chamfer moulded coping similar to that on the main west elevation. A string course at a height of *c*3.8m marks a slight stepping back of the south face. From here the chimney rises uninterrupted to eaves level at which point the east face of the chimney is angled in to a reduced width of 2.3m. The chimney is here given further coping and is carried upward in brick. The brickwork appears to be typical of the 17th to 18th century, primarily in stretcher bond and comprising long, narrow bricks, often overfired to produce a dark colouration, and set in lime mortar. Dark blue late 19th-century engineering bricks form the chimney crown and three short clay pots are mounted in flaunching at the top. Midway up the brickwork is an iron tie rod with S-plate at the north side and a simple bar to the south. During conservation works a steel rod was inserted into the south side of the chimney, securing it to the steel framework over the Drawing Room ceiling. An undated late 19th-century photograph of the courtyard shows that a light lean-to roof was located at the base of the chimney (DR/25/54/55).

The chimney has a clean straight join to the south range but its join to the adjacent stair turret is less clear cut and suggests that the chimney was built against an existing feature. The construction of the eastern part of the south range and the Drawing Room fireplace have been attributed to Erasmus Dryden who inherited the house in 1584, and the date of the fireplace has been placed at 1590. Rather than simply abutting the side of the stair turret, there is a slight projection with tapered apex at the side of the turret and it is against this that the chimney was built against. The chimney fabric rises and wraps over the projecting rubble coursing of the turret thus confirming that it is a later feature. It has been noted that a blocked window in the turret is situated awkwardly close to the wall return and it appears likely that the turret or some precursor of it was already in place prior to the construction of the chimney or that the present chimney is an expansion of an earlier one.

6.3.3. The south-east block and gable

The greater part of the south range is hidden by the chimney, stair turret and the adjoining east range, and the exposed parts comprise a vertical strip abutting the tower, and an asymmetrical gable with brick chimney.

The block presents a clear vertical join to the Tower, spanning from ground to the eaves (Figs 63, 68). The building is constructed of coursed, roughly shaped ironstone rubble with the coursing differentiated into block sizes. A window at the base of the wall is a recent insertion replacing a former doorway to the cellar (Fig 68). It is an amalgamation of mismatched window components with diamond-pattern glazing and each of the two lights has a perforated lead ventilation quarrel. The alteration was skilfully carried out and no trace of the former doorway is apparent in the fabric.

A moulded stone string course is located at a height of *c*6m, aligned with a string course on the adjacent tower, but contrasting in style and width. At the eaves is a timber wall plate and the ends of the rafters can be seen projecting a short way over the wall plate.

Of particular interest to the phasing and developmental history of this area is a short return in the south wall, adjacent to the projecting gable elevation. This area, which is hidden from ground level and only becomes apparent when viewed from the second floor windows of the north range, shows that rather than comprising a single block, there may be a possible disconnection between the area comprising the Drawing Room and Book Room, and the Painted Parlour and Spenser's Room. As will be expanded in the Discussion (Section 14) this arrangement may suggest a two phased build for this part of the house. The stone gable held over the painted timber partition in Spenser's Room is aligned with this return in the south wall and lends further credence to this area representing the former end of the range prior to an eastward expansion. The spatial disconnection between the Drawing Room and Spenser's Room is also apparent when viewed in plan, where it can be seen that the south wall to Spenser's Room is brought forward from the main wall line by 0.6m on the external face and 0.3m internally.

It might also be suggested that this arrangement is the result of trying to accommodate the existing east range, i.e. bringing the end of the building in a little to wrap around the existing building, however there is some evidence to suggest that the east range formerly projected further south than at present and was truncated backward to accommodate the later eastward expansion of the south range. Evidence for a rebuild of the east range wall at the time of the construction of the south-east block can be seen in the coursing of the east elevation which is continuous between the two areas with no visible external join. As noted in the discussion, however this idea presents some practical problems as the result of a two phased build leaves the former stone gable supported over a timber partition and it is unclear why it would be left in situ or how it could be undercut.

The gable is built of coursed shaped ironstone, the dressed blocks presenting a contrast to the rubble coursing of the wall adjacent to the tower. The asymmetrical gable drops down on the west side to accommodate a small access hatch next to the chimney. The gable shows features typical of the local 17th and 18th-century building tradition with carved kneelers and flat coping stones at the edges of the gable rising to a peak which wraps around the front of the stone chimney base. The chimney is built up the peak of the gable coping where it is crowned with stone coping and continued upward in brick. The brickwork is typical of the 17th and 18th centuries comprising relatively thin narrow bricks which have been deliberately over-fired to a dark red colour. The three flues are deliberately incorporated into the external brickwork with a separation of the bricks providing simple embellishment. The chimney is finished with late 19th-century engineering bricks and has three small clay pots.

When viewed from inside the roof space the chimney is built of unshaped coursed rubble with large quoins at the edges. The fabric also includes several fragments of decorative medieval moulded limestone, as well as fragments of red clay tile. The side purlins framing the roof cross-gable are seated in the stonework at the edges of the gable. The east side of the cross-gable is finished with laths and rendered externally.

6.3.4. The Tower

The lower parts of the south elevation of the Tower are partly hidden by the adjoining Hall range (Fig 71). The Tower is built of masonry up to first floor level from where it is continued upward with a brick facing. As previously noted there is a clear vertical join between the Tower and the adjacent block to the east and the corners of the Tower are lined with well-shaped and substantial ironstone quoins measuring *c*1m x 0.4m. Up to a height of *c*2m, the base of the south elevation is built of coursed shaped blocks interspersed with thin courses of tile-like stone, and continued upward with smaller stones arranged in courses of variable thickness.

At ground level is a blocked two-light arch-headed cavetto mullion window with hood mould (Fig 69). An iron tether ring is fixed to the wall adjacent to the window. At first floor level is a three-light, square-headed ovolo mullion window with hood mould, a later insertion and likely replacing an earlier, smaller window (Fig 234). Midway between these two windows is an interesting variation in the wall coursing in which the larger blocks are alternated with narrow stones set vertically. Level with this course is a small blocked window set within a frame of chamfer edged stone blocks (Fig 70). This window was deliberately kept open when the Hall was constructed and this necessitated an awkward angling recessing of the west courtyard wall. It is possible that the spiral stair was, at its lower levels, located in the north-west corner of the tower and was still present when the Hall was built; thus explaining why this window was deliberately retained.

At a height of 6m is a string course of chamfered stones which spans from the Hall to the join with the south-east block.

A small rectangular window, matching in dimensions the blocked window below, illuminates the spiral stair landing. It is worth noting that another such window is located a short distance away, adjacent to the door to the cellar and it is possible that this window was taken from the tower. A string course at a height of 9.3m marks the change from stone to brick and the tower is rendered above this line. Two single-light arch-headed windows are set within the brickwork and illuminate the spiral stair. Another of these windows is set on the east face of the tower.

The southern courtyard elevation Fig 63

View of the south-east range from the Tower Fig 64

The underside of the corridor with the projecting end of a tie beam Fig 65

The stair turret; note blocked window and join to chimney Fig 66

Detail of compass graffiti on the stair turret door Fig 67

The join between the tower and south-east extension Fig 68

Blocked window to the Tower Fig 69

The angling in of the west range wall to accommodate a window to a former spiral stair Fig 70

Historic photograph of the courtyard; note lean-to against the chimney, and the former door to the cellar (DR/25/54/54) Fig 71

6.4. West elevation (Figs 72-79)

The west range contains the Hall and part of the Kitchen at ground level, and the Long Gallery and adjacent rooms, as well as the Cook's and Parlour Maid's Rooms at first floor and mezzanine levels and, formerly, domestic staff accommodation in the attic or 'Garret'. It has been suggested that John Dryden constructed a fully formed H-plan house between the years 1551 when he inherited the property and his death in 1584, and that the central part of that house comprised an open hall which was later floored to create the long gallery and first floor rooms. This survey has discounted this idea in favour of a multi-phased build in which the west range was built as two storied from the start. Further, it is the conclusion of this report that the west range, at its northern end, incorporates an earlier farmhouse which was inherited by John Dryden and which he expanded to join to his Tower House. John Dryden's final H-plan arrangement was constructed of masonry but the main publically visible external elevations were faced in brick, a comparatively early use of this material in the county and a deliberate show of wealth and fashion. Upon inheriting the house in the early 18th century, Edward Dryden remodelled the main facades in order to present, as far as the house allowed, a fashionable renaissance influenced exterior, while at the same time striving to promote the family heritage, incorporating the motto 'Antient as the Druids' into the overmantle of the Drawing Room fireplace.

A staggered vertical join to the north side of the hall door marks the transition between the earlier farmhouse and the later Hall range. It was noted by Gotch in 1906 that another staggered join is located on the main west elevation (Section 5.2.1). The fabric to the north of the join comprises coursed ironstone rubble, approximately fourteen courses in 1m, with the coursing graduated between square blocks to thin tile-like blocks. At the join to the north range is a three-light ovolo mullion window which sits awkwardly close to an adjacent window. As noted at the south side of the west elevation where the wall was angled in to avoid blocking a window, the corner of the north wall has been angled inward at the join of the two windows in order to accommodate the northern jamb of the west window. This report suggests that the west wall originally carried through to join the north side of the building and the building was later expanded eastward by a single bay, to the level of the buttress on the north courtyard wall. It is probable therefore that the window of the west elevation predates the adjacent window of the north elevation.

At first floor level is a two-light chamfer mullion window to the Parlour Maid's Room. The north light is side-hung with an iron frame and has internal saddle bars with a decorative turnbuckle latch and spiral tail stay. The south jamb is directly aligned with the vertical join between the Farmhouse and Hall and it is possible that the farmhouse may have extended a little further south than the join suggests, and was truncated backwards, stopping at the level of the window in order to retain it. A short distance away is a first floor window to the mezzanine level WC. This is a two-light ovolo mullion window with square-pattern glazing. Part of the south light is side-hung with an iron frame and has a quadrant stay with internal knob handle, and a turnbuckle latch with decorative plate. The stone frame comprises a mix of stone types. Adjacent to the upper corner of the window is an external bell pull guide.

The Hall ceiling level is marked by an external string course of double ogee moulded stones and this also serves to unify the two parts of the range, softening the join between them.

The primary fabric of the west elevation, to the south of the join to the farmhouse, comprises coursed rubble, the coursing crudely sorted by block size, with occasional large stones spanning between courses. A further two vertical joins towards the south end of the elevation have been attributed to the removal of an external fireplace or stair turret. These rise from ground level to the eaves; the one to the south forming a near

vertical line, while the other appears to taper inward towards the first floor, to avoid a former window to the Long Gallery. While recording the cellar, it was noted that there are also two vertical joins on the inside of the wall in this area, one aligned with the south vertical join, and the other located below the middle cellar window. A short brick chimney rises from the top of the wall and, with the flue built into the wall, passes to the hall fireplace. The insertion of the chimney required the blocking of one of the Long Gallery windows. It is probable that the former chimney was similar to the south range chimney, serving fireplaces in the cellar, hall and first floor level. Large, conspicuous chimneys were a desirable feature of late medieval and post-medieval buildings as they demonstrated the wealth of the occupants and advertised the comforts of their home at a time when many lower status dwellings still had open hearths or simple smoke hoods or smoke bays. A tall chimney in this location would however have spoiled the symmetry of Edward Dryden's west façade and it is probable that he had it removed and had a small inconspicuous brick fireplace added to serve the Hall fireplace. It has been suggested that the rooms of the Long Gallery have been moved from the east side of the range to the west side where they could overlook the Green Court; this survey did not find evidence to support such a change, however, as will be discussed in Section 9.4 the central partition wall appears to be a later addition. The fireplace of the nursery connects to the four-flue brick and stone chimney at the junction of the west and south ranges, while the other two rooms formerly had small individual chimneys which remained in place until at least 1921. It is very unlikely that Edward would have removed the large chimney only to install two smaller ones that would throw off his symmetrical façade and the rearrangement of rooms is, therefore, likely to be late 18th or 19th-century work.

At the southern corner of the elevation is a short flight of stone steps leading down to the cellar door. The door is faced with vertical planks externally and braced internally by crudely cut horizontal boards simply nailed to the external planks, though this is likely later work. The door is swung on strap hinges with expanded ends and is secured by sliding latches and rim lock. Adjacent to the door is a narrow rectangular window set in a chamfered stone surround. As previously noted, it is possible that this window was derived from the tower. There are two further cellar windows, the sills set just above the courtyard cobbles. The central one is a two-light stone mullion, clearly incorporating a complete range of re-used window frame fragments cut to fit and reassembled to create a new frame. The third cellar window is located adjacent to the elevated stair and is a single-light window with lattice glazing, with chamfer moulding to the lintel and frame. Chamfer moulded quoins are set at the south jamb but none are present on the north jamb.

The Hall floor level, is raised 1m from the Pebble Court and the door is approached by a rise of seven stone steps flanked by curving stone walls surmounted by decorative cast stone vases of the same type as decorate the garden walls. The doorway has a stone four-centred arch frame with plain spandrels and the jambs have the same moulding pattern as was recorded on the opposing door to the Green Court, the pair of doors at the north side of the Hall, and the Hall fireplace. The door is described in greater detail in Section 8.9.

There are four remaining windows to the Long Gallery and these are set at irregular spacing, with one awkwardly positioned at the join to the north range. The windows are of equal sizes, roughly square shaped and set in deep splayed reveals with flat sills forming window seats (Fig 235). The windows have simple tenon and pegged wooden frames, each with two lights and a central square mullion with beaded internal arrises. The windows have rectangular glazing and where wooden stanchion bars don't remain in situ, the former fixing holes can be seen. Most of the lights are fixed; the southern window has one side hung light with a turnbuckle latch and large decorative plate similar to that recorded in the Maid's Room, as well as a spiral tail stay (Fig 233). The

third window from the south has a simple small turnbuckle latch and a simple stay. All of the window frames have internal nail holes indicating that they have previously been boarded up. Timber wall plates span the length of the elevation and also serve as lintels for the long gallery windows. The ends of the common rafters can be seen slightly projecting over the wall plate. At the eaves is a horizontal drain pipe supported on light brackets and dropping to two down pipes whose position is accommodated by notches in the projecting string course.

The level of the west elevation is set slightly lower than the eastward Kitchen extension and where the roof valley slopes down to their junction an odd overlap of the eaves levels is formed.

The west courtyard elevation Fig 72

Door to the cellar with former tower window adjacent Fig 73

Inserted cellar window comprising of recycled framing members Fig 74

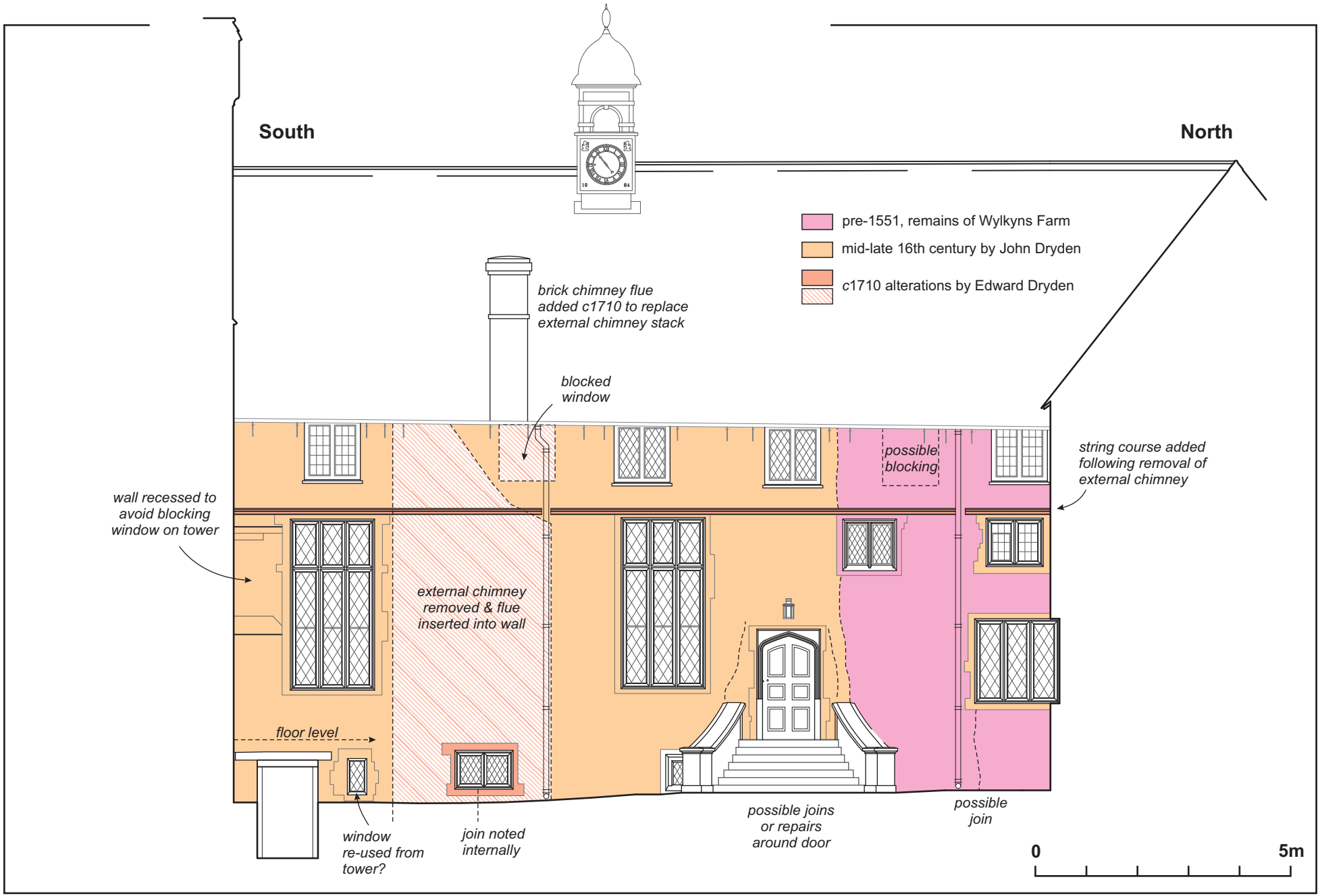
Blocked window to the Long Gallery Fig 75

Probable change in fabric between the former farmhouse and the west range Fig 76

Doorway and steps. Note changes in fabric around the doorway Fig 77

The misaligned eaves level between the west and north ranges Fig 78

Scale 1:100 (A4)



The western Courtyard elevation

Fig 79

7 CELLARS (Figs 80-104)

7.1. Room C1

Room C1 forms a short passageway between the external stair turret and the south range cellars, passing underneath the end of the east range, under the Brewhouse (Fig 104). A short flight of stone steps drops from the stair landing to the flagstone floor of C1.The ceiling and a large part of the walls are plastered and painted while the stonework at the eastern side of the room is exposed. The modern suspended ceiling partly covers a blocked wooden framed window set at the top of a window alcove (Fig 80). At the base of the alcove is a timber sill and vertical joins drop from the corners of the sill to the floor. It is possible that a doorway with steps may have formerly allowed access to the cellar from the east.

A doorway has been cut through the south wall to allow passage to Room C2, beneath the Painted Parlour (Sir Henry's Museum) (Fig 81). The doorway is narrow, *c*0.7m wide, and the stonework on its right side is truncated back in a curve. A brick archway spans the top of the door.

7.2. Room C2, former Laundry

Room C2 occupies the eastern part of the south range, under the Painted Parlour. It is roughly square in plan and is accessed from the north and west via Rooms C1 and C3 (Fig 104). A fireplace is located in the north-west corner of the room and there are two windows to the south. A modern electrical cupboard has been built into the north-east corner of the room. The room's floor is a patchwork of irregularly sized, square and rectangular flagstones.

The fireplace occupies most of the north wall. It is stone built with a substantial lintel that spans its full width and may have been truncated to accommodate the doorway. The lintel is a squared boxed heart oak timber and has a chamfered underside edge with straight stops at each of the fireplace cheeks. The inner face of the lintel is cut back at 45° and this face, as well as the underside and outer chamfer, is charred and blackened. The chimney flue is brick built, with brick repairs near the base, and the stonework is also burnt and fire damaged. At the top of the fireplace, below the ceiling, is a lintel or plate which carries the ceiling joists (Fig 85). This beam ends at the edge of the fireplace and is taken over by another short beam which carries the joists over the door opening.

An east-west beam crosses the centre of the ceiling, carried in the east and west walls (Fig 81). It is a boxed heart oak, square profile with chamfered edges and ogee stops. Narrow modern pine rails have been fixed to each side of the bridging beam to support the joists and also to carry electrical wires. At the south side of the room the joists are carried over an exposed beam which in turn is supported on a square bracket or corbel located centrally to the south wall, between the two windows (Fig 84). At either end it is embedded in the walls and has latterly been provided with additional steel supports (Fig 83). The beam is a squared oak with chamfered edge and ogee stops. It is set lower than the windows and has been reduced where it crosses them.

There are twelve pit-sawn oak joists, set on edge, and these are socketed to the bridging beam mortices using soffit tenons with diminished haunches. This type of joist has been described as “the ultimate joist end joint, believed to afford the maximum possible mechanical efficiency in cases where the neutral axis of the main joist is level with the tenon’s soffit. This was, apparently, developed by Master Richard Russell, and was used for the side purlins of the roof of King’s College Chapel at Cambridge in 1510-12” (Hewett 1997, 282). In Essex this joint type appears in timber-framed buildings from the early 16th century and was widely adopted by the second quarter of the 16th century (Walker 1998). The extent of use and date range of this type of joint in

Northamptonshire has not at this time been studied; at Canons Ashby House it appears to have been the preferred joist to beam arrangement with numerous examples visible in all of the ranges. Medieval builders used square joists or placed rectangular joists horizontally broad, often closely spaced with little distance between. An increased knowledge of timber strength led to the use of thinner, deeper joists which were stronger in proportion to their depth and these were braced by the use of cross-stiffeners (Innocent 1916).

The floor boards of the Painted Parlour are raised slightly above the joists by means of narrow planks and the floor was given additional support by beams on edge set between the existing joists. Several of the joists were replaced during the 1980s conservation works; the undersides of the original joists show the scars and nails of a former lath and plaster ceiling.

7.3. Room C3, former Dairy

Room C3 occupies the footprint of the Drawing Room and Book Room (Sir Henry Dryden's Study) (Fig 104). The walls of the room are stone-built with modern brick repairs and retain areas of lime plaster and white paint. No features relating to the room's former function as a Dairy remains *in situ* save for a shallow linear channel in the flagstone floor along the south side of the room.

The room is crossed by two bridging beams with an additional beam set alongside the western wall (Fig 86). As recorded in C2, modern pine rails are fixed to both sides of the beams. During the 1980s conservation works, brick piers were built under each of the beams to give them additional support. The beam at the west side of the room also has two brick piers and these abut the main wall. The bridging beams are boxed heart oak with chamfered edges and ogee stops. There are twelve lines of joists which connect to the upper part of the beams. The joists are pit-sawn oak set on edge and, as noted in C2, have soffit tenons with diminished haunches. The joists are set parallel rather than perpendicular to the floor boards above and this has necessitated the addition of a series of battens over the joists. The battens are held in shallow notches on the top of the joists. In order to provide a level floor surface thin wedges (packing or graving pieces) have been added into the notches where needed. The ghosting and nails of a former lath and plaster ceiling can be seen on the underside of the joists.

Interspersed between the current joists are empty mortice slots at the same level as the active joist tenons (Fig 90). Several of these empty mortices are partly truncated by the current joists. Aligned with each of the slots is another line of empty mortices cut into the lower, chamfered edge of the beam. Although deep double tenoned joists are present in the house, it is likely that that the lower mortices relate to supporting battens for an earlier ceiling, predating that suggested by the current joists, and the upper mortices served an earlier joist arrangement.

At the east end of the room the joists are held in pockets at the top of the wall. At the west side of the room the joists are not carried in the tower wall but rather over a beam set alongside the wall (Fig 89). During conservation the north end of the beam was cut away and a new length of oak added and the end of this piece is supported in the north wall. The fresh piece has been given a chamfered edge with a step and hollow stop close to the scarf joint to the older beam. The beam is supported by a flat-topped, curved wooden bracket or corbel embedded in the tower wall. The former white paint of the corbel has largely fallen away to reveal a scratched XV mark on the curved face. It is unclear if there was formerly a matching corbel at the other side of the beam. An east-facing ogee stop is located on the beam a short distance to the left of the corbel, with an opposing stop located *c*1m away. The significance of these stops is unclear; they are wide enough to suggest a doorway but are not aligned with the current door

opening. There are no mortice slots cut into this beam; the joists have shallow notches on their underside and are carried over the top of the beam.

The window to the Pebble Court is two-light chamfer-moulded with lattice glazing and a ventilation quarry in each light, and with stanchions within each light. The internal face of the mullion, jambs and sill show a concentration of graffiti, including initials, with dated examples at 1905, 1930 and 1954. The space occupied by this window was formerly a doorway which was still extant in 1921 (Gotch 1921) and, like the door at the south-west corner of pebble court, was sunk below ground level and accessed by a short flight of steps. The former doorway is not evident externally but the vertical joins are visible below the internal window opening (Fig 88). An annotated plan of the cellars by a member of the house volunteer team states that the steps were removed by the National Trust; therefore this conversion to a window is very recent (Dibben 2017). It is unclear if the window placed here is from the house or was brought in from elsewhere, therefore the graffiti recorded on the stonework may not be relevant to the house.

The fireplace is the lowest opening to the tall chimney stack that also serves the fireplaces of both the Book Room and Drawing Room. It is stone built with splayed cheeks and the opening is spanned by a slightly curving oak lintel which was formerly painted white (Fig 87). The edge of the lintel is chamfered with simple stops. The reverse face of the lintel is chamfered back. The base of the fireplace is raised by two courses and an iron grate remains in place. A short distance up the back wall of the fireplace is a protruding iron bar with attached chain. Two carved wooden shelf supports for a former mantle shelf remain attached to the lintel.

A series of substantial oak beams are embedded in the south wall to support the ends of the bridging beams (Fig 91). These timbers are set lower than the window lintels so that they obscure the upper parts of the windows. Where the beams cross the windows they have been hacked back at an angle to allow more light to the room. The bridging beams are jointed into the sides of the southern wall beams, with run out stops respecting these connections.

An exposed stone adjacent to the doorway to C2 shows scratched graffiti: some lettering and also linear scratches.

7.4. Room C4, Tower Cellar

This space fully occupies the footprint of the tower and is bounded by the tower's stone wall (Figs 230, 231). The floor level is slightly higher than that in Room C3 and a short flight of steps joins the two rooms. Room C4 has been partly subdivided by a brick partition wall and a stud partition but the space will, for the purpose of this report, be considered as a single room. The north-east corner of the room is occupied by a dog-leg stone stair that emerges at ground floor level beneath the main stair. The stair landing is covered by a modern fire door and it is bounded to the south by a masonry pier and adjacent stone wall with projecting relieving arch.

The room has a lowered modern plasterboard ceiling which hides the joist arrangement, leaving only the main beams exposed. The floor's stone paving has largely been lost save for a few pieces at the edges of the walls and a pathway of modern concrete pavers has been added. The fragmentary remains of the earlier floor comprise interlocking triangular stones though it is uncertain if this pattern applied only to the edges of the room or the full flooring scheme. The walls are coursed shaped stone rubble retaining white paint and areas of lime plaster.

To the north side of the doorway between Rooms C3 and C4 the wall has been much repaired with brick, with only a few stone blocks visible. The wall to the south of the door has also been repaired, though to a lesser degree, and there is a large patch of cement and concrete repair in the south-east corner of the room. A concrete lintel is

located centrally to the doorway, flanked by timber beams. Adjacent to the doorway is an alcove with stone relieving arch. The wall at the back of the alcove and above the arch is stone-built with plaster over. At ceiling level a beam spans across the alcove and is carried over the doorway lintel and in the stone pier adjacent to the alcove.

The masonry pier is roughly square in plan and acts as a solid core for the overlying tower stair. The lower stones facing the alcove are projected outward slightly to form a simple plinth. Towards the top of the alcove the stonework is tapered irregularly backwards. A well-built stone pier, *c*0.4m square abuts the west side of the main pier and carries the room's central bridging beam (Fig 92). The supporting pier is built of well-dressed ashlar blocks and its base is projected outwards and chamfered. At the top of the pier is a timber pad. A similar pier is positioned at the south end of the beam, abutting the south wall. A modern brick pier with concrete cap was added during conservation works to further support the beam.

The bridging beam is boxed heart oak, *c*250mm wide and *c*400mm deep (visible), and has chamfered underside edges with a run out stop at its southern end, positioned before it meets the stone pier at that side (Figs 92, 230). Modern pine rails carrying electrical cables are fixed to the beam. The beam stops at the southern wall and is carried only on the pier. Empty chisel cut mortice slots, each *c*100mm deep and *c*0.8mm x 0.2mm, are cut into both sides of the beam, just above the chamfered lower edges. Similar slots were noted in Rooms C3, C5 and C6. Where the beam meets the stair doorway the chamfered edge has a run-out stop which is immediately taken over by a large ogee carving and the beam underside is raised to provide increased head room to the door. The carving is unfortunately obscured by the modern wall door and wall but it is clear that the inner face of the beam (facing the stair) has a different shape pattern to the outer (Fig 93). At the north side of the doorway the beam is rounded with an intricate moulding below. The three empty joist slots visible within the doorway, unlike those visible on the main span of the beam, have tapered shoulders. These joints however are level with the current joists which are hidden by the modern ceiling and it is probable therefore that as recorded in the other cellar rooms of the south range the joists have soffit tenons with diminished haunches.

At its west side the room is bounded by the stone wall at the base of the tower (Fig 230). The wall is broken by an opening *c*1.6m in width which is spanned by a timber beam (Fig 94). The stone wall is not carried upward to the ground floor and the overlying partitions rest atop the timber beam. A large part of the beam was removed during conservation works as it had rotted, and was supplemented with concrete. The underside of the beam, where it crosses the opening, has been curved to increase the height. A pair of side by side notches on the underside of the beam over the opening is suggestive of a former door or post arrangement. At the north side the beam is carried over a short length of wall which abuts the main north wall, but it is unclear if they are keyed into each other. To each side of the opening, on both sides of the beam, are 100mm deep rectangular mortice notches. It is probable that these are defunct joist slots but no other slots could be seen due to conservation repairs. The opposing beam in Room C5 has empty joist slots and the two were likely linked by an earlier ceiling arrangement.

In the north-west corner of the room a short alcove has been built into the north wall. It has a thick timber lintel with chamfered edge and straight-cut stops and shows numerous tool marks on the face. While the lower side of the lintel is flattened and smoothed, the upper side is irregular and unworked. A matching alcove in located a short distance to the west in Room C5.

The south-west corner of the room has been partly enclosed from the main space by a brick wall. This joins to a short length of stone walling perpendicular to the main west wall. Within the enclosed space are a number of short brick walls that subdivide the

space. At the time of survey this space was used as storage and access was limited. The walls were partly plastered and a carved graffito partially survived on the west wall. This appeared to read “by / De… 29…1810 [or 1910]”. A capital G, probably recent, and an older capital L are scratched nearby in the same area.

Adjacent to the stair landing is an unusual stud partition arrangement which appears to underlie and perhaps partly support the main stair though the studs are in poor condition and one of the studs no longer reaches the ground. The studs have regularly spaced peg holes, some with truncated pegs *in situ* and the wall is faced with nailed planks. These partitions are continued into the adjacent stair.

7.5. Room C5

This room occupies the narrow space between the tower and the stone partition wall located below the Dining Room (Fig 231). In the south-west corner of the room is a modern electrical cupboard and the room is separated from room C6 by a modern fire door. As recorded in Room C4, the former floor surface has been removed to show bare dirt and a path of concrete pavers leads to the door.

An alcove of matching form and proportions to that in Room C4 is built into the room’s north wall. It has a simple wooden sill and a timber lintel with chamfered edges and straight stops. The south window is externally a two-light arch headed cavetto mullion window. Only half of the window is visible in the room, the other half being hidden by a thickening of the wall in stone.

7.6. Room C6, former Ale Cellar

This room occupies most of the footprint of the Dining Room and is a roughly square space measuring *c*11.5m x 11.5m (Fig 104). At the time of this survey the room was used for storage and this limited access and photography. The room has a flagstone floor with shallow drainage channels forming a square, and with a channel leading out of the room and into the adjacent room, C7. The walls are coursed stone rubble, generally exposed, with the remains of former white paint and lime plaster.

Central to the room is a north-south aligned bridging beam which is supported on stone piers at its north and south ends, and on a modern brick column centrally (Fig 95). At the west side of the room the joists are supported by a beam which is set in front of the west wall and is supported by two modern brick columns. At the east side of the room a third beam is set into the top of the east wall. The eastern and central beams are of similar dimensions, 200mm in width and 300mm deep, and have chamfered edges and simple run out stops. The western beam is a crisply cut rectangular beam set on edge, likely an 18th century addition. The floor frame presents a complex arrangement which is partly a result of the ceiling being lowered in *c*1710 to increase the height of the room above, partly due to accommodating the unusually long floor boards set parallel with the primary joists, and also due to modern repairs (Fig 112).

The central and eastern beams have regularly spaced empty mortice slots set level with the chamfer line at the bottom of each beam and these may relate to a former ceiling as also noted in Rooms C3 and C4. At the top of the beams and aligned with each of the empty mortices are pit-sawn oak joists, each bearing the discolouration and nails of a former lath and plaster ceiling (Fig 96). These joists have soffit tenons with diminished haunches and are interspersed with modern ones added during conservation works. The floor boards are aligned parallel with the joists, and battens, set perpendicular to the floor boards are lapped over the joists. Several of the battens retain bark on their underside surfaces. Several repairs to the joists were evident and these also had lath and plaster marks. A small part of the former ceiling, retaining laths and traces of the plaster, survives *in situ* in the north-east corner of the room. It is

unclear if the modern joists are socketed into the beams; they are however supported by modern rails fixed to the sides.

At the north side of the room is a masonry core which arches out at the top to support the dining room hearth. At the outer edge of the arch where it meets the ceiling is a joist with rounded moulding on the underside face. Remnant plasterwork survives on the edges of the arch.

Two vertical lines are noticeable in the south wall, framing a probable blocking *c*1.8m wide and spanning from floor to ceiling (Fig 97). This blocking may relate to a former external chimney built on the south side of the Dining Room and which was removed when the south elevation was re-faced. No trace of the blocking can be seen externally due to the uniform ashlar facing added in *c*1710. It should be noted that although the blocking is off-centre to the cellar room, it is set centrally to the Dining Room footprint.

Adjacent to the doorway between rooms C6 and C7 is a bell pull and pivots carry the bell wires between the two rooms.

7.7. Room C7

This room, along with the other cellar rooms below the Hall were identified as *Small Beer Cellars* on the 1756 house inventory. At present it acts simply as a through passage between the southern and western parts of the cellar. The lower parts of the walls are coursed stone, partly plastered, with brickwork springing up from the stone walls to form a vaulted ceiling. The vaulting is faced with headers measuring 110mm x 60mm and five courses are 360mm high. Where the full length of the bricks are visible in the doorways, they were measured at 230mm x 110mm x 60mm. There is some variability to the brick dimensions and linear skintles were noted parallel and central to the stretcher faces.

The room has a flagstone floor and a linear channel leads out from room C6, and turns to cross the length of C7 and out into the adjacent corridor where it runs towards the door to the Pebble Court.

The vaulted ceiling partly obscures an awkwardly positioned window in the north-west corner of the room and the north jamb of the window is set further back than the north wall of the room. The window sill is primarily modern brick and the window splays are also formed of brick set within the earlier stonework. The sill drops to a lower shelf and it is possible that a taller window was once set here but was replaced by a smaller one.

The walls converge at the east side of the room to frame an open doorway with an arched brick head. The block and rubble coursing while comprises the lower parts of the walls gives way to larger quoin stones.

7.8. Room C8

This is a narrow corridor, *c*1.4m wide and 11.2m long, which spans the length of the Hall and gives access to the former Small Beer Cellars (Fig 98). The corridor is paved with square flagstones, with smaller stones set alongside the east wall. It was noted that several triangular stones of the same type as those recorded in the tower cellar, room C4, were among the paving stones used here.

The west wall is comprised of sandy-orange, shaped stone rubble with larger quoins and brick arches over the doorways. Timber lintels are set above the arches to carry the joists. The stones forming the east wall are a different stone type and are less well shaped with greater irregularity of dimension. A narrow vertical groove is visible on the south wall, between the doorways to the Pebble Court and room C7. Adjacent to the groove is a projecting series of stones forming a short step. The purpose of these features could not be determined but they may predate the construction of the west range.

The northern half of the east wall is internally faced with brick and the transition between stone and brick is stepped inward. The transition also coincides with a change in the ceiling joist arrangement. The joists along the southern half of the corridor are set at regular intervals of *c*300mm. The joists appear to be pit sawn oak, some waney edged, generally *c*100mm in width and *c*200mm deep, and are embedded in the east and west walls and carried on timber lintels where they cross doorways.

A distinct pair of vertical lines indicating a blocking flanked by quoins can be seen between the two southern windows of the east wall (Fig 99). The upper part of the right hand join is lost due to later conservation and repairs, and the left hand join runs up to the window sill where it is truncated by the later window. The blocking is carried out in stone rubble. The southern join coincides with an external join that spans the full height of the courtyard wall. There is no obvious external pairing for the northern join though the northern join of the external alteration is located a short distance to the north of the middle window. It should be noted here that the northern external join is approximately aligned with the internal brick facing of the wall.

Bell wires continue from C7 and along the corridor into the kitchen.

7.9. Rooms C9 and C10

These rooms, described as Small Beer Cellars on the house inventory of 1756, were later used for the storage of root vegetables. Room C9 has recently been made to resemble a makeshift photographic dark room though it is not known which room was used for this purpose by Alice Dryden. Both rooms have walls of coursed stone rubble with brick barrel vaults springing from shoulder height.

Along the sides of the rooms are brick partitions standing to a height of *c*0.5m, and subdivided into five bins, though some of the internal divisions have been removed to create larger divisions. The bricks are unfrogged red bricks measuring *c*240mm x 120mm x 77mm, with pale cream mortar attached. The partitions abut the stone walling except or at the upper courses where the terminal brick of each is partly housed in a slot in the wall. In the gap between the bins, at the west wall of each room are shallow channels, also lined with brick and with stone covers. The west walls of the rooms are the internal face of the main western elevation and, as noted in Section 5.2, a vertical join lined with quoins can be seen in room C10, spanning between the floor and ceiling (Fig 100). A matching join forming the opposing side of a former opening is not visible but may be hidden behind the wall that separates the two rooms.

It is probable that the vaulting was built in the early 18th century to support the new stone floor of the Hall which was added as part of Edward Dryden's scheme of alterations.

7.10. Room C11

The third vaulted cellar room is a little narrower than the adjacent rooms at 2.3m wide and its length is limited by the need to accommodate a doorway from the Kitchen. Rather than brick bins, the room’s subdivisions accommodate shelves and the room has recently been made to resemble a wine store, though it is not known precisely which of the cellar rooms was used for this purpose. As in the other two rooms a brick drain with stone covers spans the base of the west wall. The west, south and north walls are built of coursed rubble and the floor consists of stone flags. The room is entered through a segmental brick archway with timber lintel over.

Adjacent to the room is a rectangular masonry core on which is seated one end of a short bridging beam which carries pairs of closely set joists. The beam is oak, squared on the underside but retaining bark on the upper face.

7.11. Larder, C12

The Larder is entered through the Kitchen and although below the Green Court ground level, its ceiling is set above the floor level of the Kitchen and is accessed by a flight of four stone steps. The room is rectangular in plan, measuring 5.4m x 3.7m and the former lath and plaster ceiling has been removed, revealing the joists and bridging beam (Fig 101). The walls are coursed stone rubble, plastered and whitewashed, and the floor is comprised of a patchwork of dark stone flags.

The door is plank and batten with diagonal bracing and is swung on simple tapered strap hinges and secured with sliding bolts. The end of the bridging beam is exposed above the doorway and the end of a horizontal beam embedded in the wall is also exposed at the top of the door. It is possible that the current door is a later arrangement, created when the Kitchen was enlarged. Above the doorway is the sloping plank floor of the Winter Parlour alcove.

There are two windows, to the west and to the south, and both are two-light square headed, ovolo mullion windows set in splayed reveals. The south window sill is formed of bricks laid flat, with brick repairs below, and the west window sill is comprised of older, narrower bricks.

The bridging beam is set east to west at the centre of the room (Fig 104). This is formed of boxed heart oak with the very deep chamfers often found on 16th century timbers of this function. At both sides of the beam are hollow and step stops. At its western end the beam was truncated and a tenon created to fit into the timber lintel over the window. The windows are likely later additions to the room and the cutting out of the window removed the beam's support. Two brick columns were added during the conservation works to provide additional support to the bridging beam.

The joists were also of oak and pit-sawn from thick slabs sawn out of hewn saw baulks. The latter rectangular baulks were initially made by hewing with axes, and tool marks from all three stages of the 'conversion' process were visible. This method of producing secondary framing timbers is typical of the 16th to 17th centuries in England. Whilst the joists are deeper than they are wide (unlike typical medieval floor joists set 'on face') they are not of the deep plank-like section typically used from the late 18th century onward. They were joined into the bridging beam mortices using soffit tenons with diminished haunches (Fig 102). No woodworking features of the floor frame would preclude a 16th century date though it could also be a little later. The underside of the joists show nail holes and lath and plaster marks of a former ceiling and the tenons and haunches had been chewed by rats and mice which were able to navigate over the top of the former ceiling.

The floorboards are a patchwork of recent, old repair, and possibly original boards. The oldest looking being pit-sawn oak and some possibly later, were pit-sawn elm. In addition there are some recent elm replacements and a patch of very recent conifer boards.

In the south-east corner of the room a small duct or flue is built into the south wall at ground level. Adjacent to the door a bonding timber in the wall remains exposed through the plasterwork and appears to have supported a raised shelf. A pair of iron hooks embedded in the wall formerly held a second shelf above. A shallow stone basin with central drain is held over short brick legs in the north-west corner of the room and a substantial timber work bench / table is positioned against the east wall.

A square alcove, enclosed with bricks laid flat, and with a timber lintel and brick sill, is built into the east wall (Fig 103). The depth of this feature suggests that it may have formerly carried fully through the wall.

Blocked window in Room C1 Fig 80

Inserted doorway between Rooms C1 and C2 Fig 81

Room C2, looking south Fig 82

The lowered joist rail at the south side of the room Fig 83

Timber bracket holding the lowered rail Fig 84

The fireplace in Room C2 Fig 85

Room C3, the former Dairy, looking west Fig 86

The fireplace in Room C3 Fig 87

Blocked door in Room C3 Fig 88

Bracket supporting the western bridging beam Fig 89

Detail of bridging beam, showing defunct mortice arrangement Fig 90

Beam embedded in the south wall to support the bridging beams and joists Fig 91

Masonry pier in Room C4. Note defunct mortice slots on bridging beam Fig 92

Carved door head to former stair; note defunct mortices for soffit tenons Fig 93

Masonry wall and timber beam at the west side of the tower Fig 94

Room C6, looking south-west. Note mortices on underside edge Fig 95

The joist and batten arrangement of the Dining Room floor Fig 96

Blocking in the south wall of Room C6 Fig 97

Corridor C8, looking north Fig 98

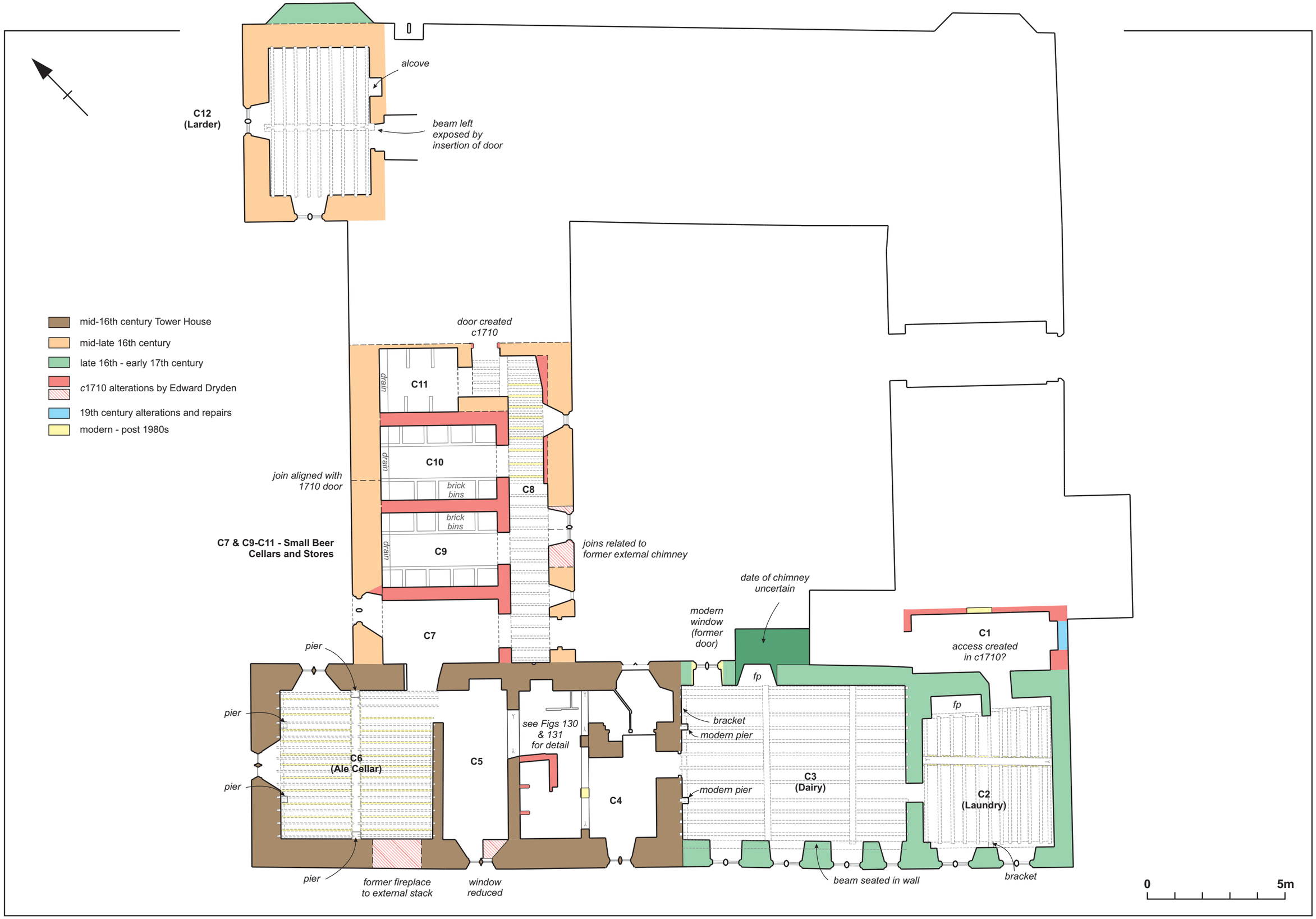
Blocking in the east wall of the corridor Fig 99

Vertical join in the west wall of Room C10 Fig 100

General view of the Larder (C12), looking north-west Fig 101

The Larder joist and bridging beam arrangement Fig 102

Blocked alcove in the east wall of the Larder Fig 103



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Cellar plan, showing the joist and beam arrangements Fig 104

8 GROUND FLOOR ROOM DESCRIPTIONS (Fig 152)

8.1. The north range passageway

This passageway or corridor measures *c*9.6m x 1.3m and provides access to the Kitchen, the former Laundry, the former Bakehouse and the stair to the private apartment (Fig 152). The north side of the corridor is largely bounded by wooden partition walls and doors to the stair and under stair cupboards.

The floor is an uneven surface of rough flagstones similar to those of the Kitchen. These are of a variety of sizes and form a patchwork of square and rectangular units. The majority have a dark patina to the surface while others have a pale yellow hue. At the west end of the passageway the floor changes to a brick surface which leads into the Kitchen, and in the passageway stops in line with the centre of the stair. The main part of the brickwork is set on edge and the brickwork is separated from the stone flags by a row of bricks laid flat, however two stones intrude into the end of the brick surface where it meets the courtyard wall.

The coursed stonework is exposed at the base of the external wall and a dado rail at a height of 0.8m separates the upper parts of the wall which are plastered. As previously noted, pairs of vertical joins carry the lines of the window reveals down to the ground, suggesting that these were formerly doors or windows with full height reveals. The flat timber lintels over the two windows are hidden behind arched heads.

Where the south wall reaches the kitchen doorway the angle is changed and the wall is brought inwards slightly. The area marks the transition between the Kitchen extension and the later north-east wing and the doorway was inserted through the wall which may have been reduced in width. A similar peculiarity of angle can also be seen in the same area on the first floor. A shallow cutaway in the wall to the left of the door arch accommodates the end of a former water pipe.

At the east end of the corridor, between the door to the former Laundry and the adjacent electrical cupboard, the corridor is bounded by the side of the Bakehouse oven and the substantial quoins of that structure are visible. The masonry transitions to brickwork in a clear vertical line which is aligned with the back of the ovens.

8.2. The former Water House

The former water house, now referred to as the Pump Room is located to the north side of the passageway through the East Range (Fig 107). It is a small rectangular room measuring 5m x 2.5m, a space which is reduced by the full height stone pier that projects into the room. To either side of the pier the room is separated from the passageway by thin light partitions. The other walls are of roughly shaped coursed stone blocks covered in white wash. There was formerly a small hatch opening through the north wall into the Laundry but this has been blocked in stone. The main area of flooring is concrete, with square flagstones paving the west side of the room.

There are three doors at the west side of the room, one allowing access to the entrance passageway, one opening to the courtyard and the other leading to the adjacent Wash House or Laundry. The doors are all fairly simple plank and batten doors with iron strap hinges, latch openings and sliding locks. The doors into the passageway and Laundry are not depicted on Sir Henry's plan of 1863 (Fig 151) and these openings are likely early 20th century additions (D(CA)474 1863).

A wall-mounted 19th century hand-operated water pump is located in the north-east corner of the room from which a lead pipe crosses the north wall just below ceiling level and joins to an elevated wooden water tank. The tank is built of nailed wooden planks with external bracing and appears to be lead lined. It is supported over joists, one of which is embedded in the west wall at one end and in the stone plinth at the

east end. The other three joists are carried over the northern door lintel in the west wall and at the east side are supported over a square profile beam which is embedded in the stone plinth and in the north wall. This beam is fairly plain but has chamfered underside edges, *c*1m in length, at its northern end.

The stone pier is an unusual feature, measuring *c*2.6m x 1m, and rising from the floor to ceiling without carrying through into the room above. It is a well-made and substantial structure with dressed quoins of alternating thickness. The north face is reduced at a height of *c*1.5m and the reducing edge is chamfered inwards and has chamfered corners. At floor level, just above the concrete, can be seen the top of another thickening of the north face. A thick, waney edged beam crosses below ceiling level the alcove formed between the pier and the south-east corner of the room. One end is embedded into the stonework of the pier but the other end, which is roughly tapered, appears to rest on a lip in the stonework over the east window lintel.

Another beam crosses the room at ceiling level between the east corner of the pier and the north wall and is embedded in the stonework of both. The beam is white washed and the timber is mostly unshaped and waney edged on the western side and chamfered and shaped on the east face and underside. The distal ends of the west face are also chamfered. A chamfered stop can be seen at the north end of the east face but set at a short distance from the wall. An iron clasp is embedded in the beam at its north end. It is likely that this timber is a re-used piece or offcut. An electric light is hung from the beam.

In the 19th century a buried cistern was exposed in the room and was used to contain water pumped from the Norwell located a short distance to the north-east of the house. The licence for the Norwell was granted in 1253 by Robert de Ley and it comprises a small stone structure covering the well. The level of the well is higher level than the cistern and water was carried to the house by means of lead pipes and hollowed trunks. A wooden tank was buried just outside the Water House with a lead waste water pipe passing through the east wall from the cistern (Fig 105). A deeper manhole was located 8ft from the tank. An account of a repair to the tank was provided by Sir Henry in 1880.

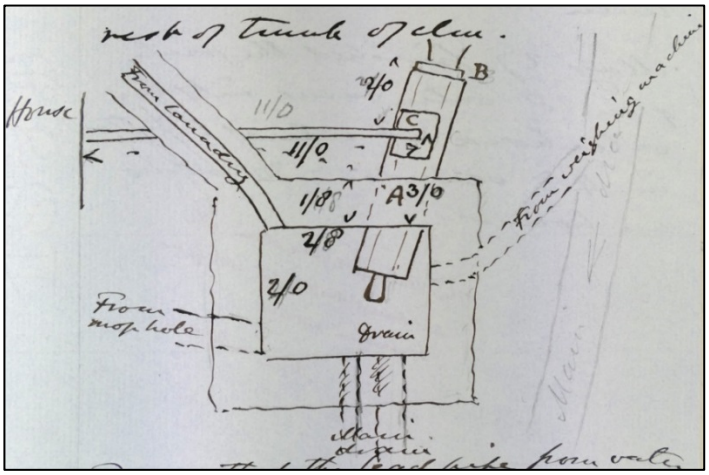
> In May 1880 found that the wooden tank leaked & that no water came into water house. Opened to lower [?] piece of tank. This lower piece is of oak & most of tank of clay [?]. Found that the lead pipe from water house joined in the wall at A. At a few inches above joining was a hole in the lead pipe apparently made by a pick & it leaked. There was also a leak at A & at 1st joint of tank B. Changed the junction of lead pipe to C & plugged up A. Made a fresh joint at B with tallow & linen. May 27 finished the joints & on 28 water came into the water house at rate of 1 gallon in 45 seconds = 80 gallons an hour (D(CA)476/21/7).

Arthur Dryden added a postscript to Sir Henry's note as follows: "The water house altered after Sir Henry's death; this note made by him is therefore useless."

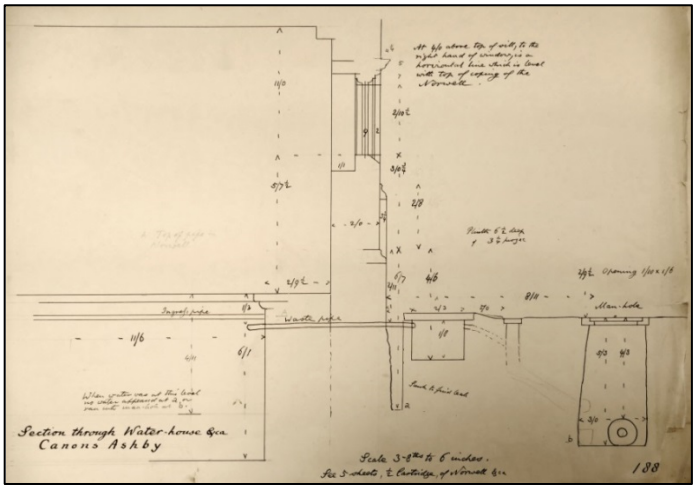
Sir Henry also produced a detailed cross-section of the cistern and the east wall, as well as the external tank and manhole (D(CA)475 1880, Fig 106). The tank is recorded as being 6'1" in depth and is shown in plan as wrapping around the north and west sides of the plinth (D(CA)474), though a plan by Gotch shows the cistern continuing around the east side (Gotch 1936, 85).

The purpose of the stone plinth is not clear as it does not appear to serve any obvious function for the cistern. It has been suggested that it may be the truncated remains of a former chimney, however, when the cistern was excavated the chimney would have had to have been underpinned and made good to prevent possible collapse. Further, if

the chimney was no longer functional there would be no need to keep the lower part since it no longer served a purpose except perhaps as support for the first floor.

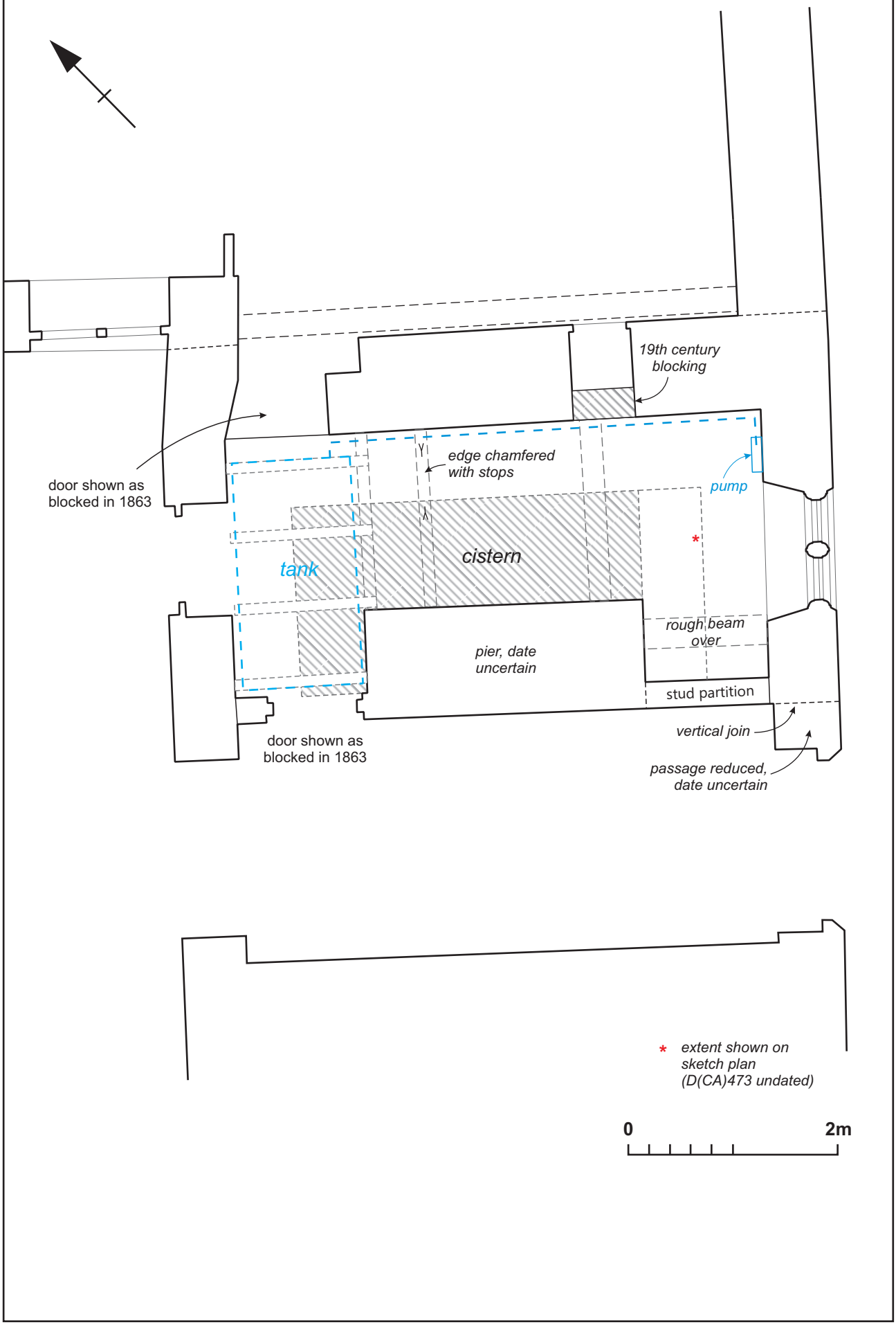


Henry Dryden's sketch plan of the external water tank, 1880 (D(CA)476/21/7)
Fig 105



Henry Dryden's cross-section of the Water House and cistern, 1880 (D(CA)475)
Fig 106

View of the Water House with the pier to the left Fig 107



Scale 1:50 (A4)

Plan of the Water House Fig 108

8.3. The former Wash House / Laundry

In the 19th century the Wash House was a single room; it has since been partitioned into two offices of which the smaller is accessed via the east-west corridor of the north range.

The door from the corridor is plank and batten with beaded edges to the planks and battens and is set within a wooden frame. It has a rim-lock and a wood and iron latch and swings on two tapered round-end strap hinges. In the south-west corner of the first office is the disused door to the Water House, and the former hatch between the rooms now serves as a storage space and is equipped with a simple wooden door. Both rooms have been modernised, painted and carpeted for use as office spaces. The projecting northern bay has been enclosed for a server room.

The larger of the two rooms is bounded to the west by the back of the Bakehouse oven and fireplace and these form alcoves and an irregular wall face. Henry Dryden's plan of 1836 (D(CA)474 1863) shows a projecting circular feature in the north-west corner of the room which was most likely a copper. This feature was partly contained within the arched alcove. In the corner of the walls adjacent to the arched alcove are two short angled beams or steps which correspond with the position of a fireplace in the room above.

An exposed beam, roughly shaped and waney edged, spans the ceiling from east to west.

8.4. The former Bakehouse

The Bakehouse is subdivided into two rooms which now function as store rooms, one containing electrical switches and water heaters. The room is separated from the adjacent passageway by the brick walls and plank-clad stud partitions that also enclose the stair. This current division of the space dates to at least the mid 19th century and can be seen on Henry Dryden's plan of the house (D(CA)474 1863). The room has concrete floors and the walls are bare stone painted white. The east wall is occupied by a small circular bread oven and a large inglenook-type fireplace. The window in the north-east corner of the room is set within a deep splay and has a sloped sill down to a waist-height ledge. The east wall forms a vertical join to the corner of the room where it meets the window splay. A large part of the east wall is plastered and painted however it appears to be wholly faced in dressed stone whilst the oven and rear of the fireplace are in brick. The upper right corner of the wall is angled inward revealing an angled step which corresponds with the hearth of an angled fireplace in the room above. The bread oven is set behind a square opening in the stonework, with a shaped stone lintel and brick sill. The arched opening of the oven is *c*0.5m x 0.5m and the oven is *c*0.8m deep. The bricks around the opening show soot encrustation and are degraded by heat damage. The arched brick oven opening is set slightly off-centre to the stone opening.

The oven has a substantial oak lintel *c*1.7m in length with each end embedded in the stone walls. The outer underside edge is chamfered and has cyma moulded stops that correspond with the edges of the fire opening. The inner side of the lintel is cut back at 45° and is blackened. The same profile was also noted on the cellar fireplaces. Although the back of the fireplace is brick, the square flue above the lintel is lined with stone and is angled slightly southwards. The 1863 plan shows a former fire opening in the north-west corner of the room with the flue carried in the kitchen chimney stack.

The bakehouse is crossed by two beams which pass across the partitions and into the courtyard wall. The underside edges of the beams are chamfered with stepped stops.

8.5. The former Brewhouse

The former Brewhouse, measuring 5m x 7.3m, now serves as a bookshop and prior to the 1980s restoration was a jeweller's workshop. The north side of the room wraps around a substantial inglenook fireplace and axial chimney stack (Fig 109). Similar to the pier in the Water House, the fireplace and chimney is built of shaped, coursed rubble with large dressed quoins. The fire opening is 1.8m wide and recessed 1.4m, and is crossed by a boxed heart oak lintel which retains the truncated ends of soffit tenoned and peg secured quarter sectioned oak joists. A possible deliberate candle burn can be seen on the outer face of the beam. The inside edge of the beam is deeply chamfered and smoke blackened. The timber retains some bark on the hidden upper face and the knotty appearance of the beam end suggests that it was a 'top log'. One of the joist mortices has been caught in section at the cut eastern end of the beam, suggesting that the timber is a re-used former bridging beam rather than suggesting that joists supported a former platform.

Several tie beams are exposed below the Brewhouse ceiling and these seat the principal rafter trusses. The beams are oak, with a generally square profile with chamfered edges and have unusual raised and tapered stops at both ends respecting the current wall positions (Fig 110). A number of iron hooks have been fixed to the beams. A diagonal beam is located in the south-east corner of the room, spanning between the east wall and the southern tie beam. The end of the beam is curved inward where it meets the wall so that it enters at a more perpendicular angle. Its purpose is unclear as it does not correspond with any existing or visible feature on the floor above or in the roof space. A wooden rail has been nailed to the side of the main beam, spanning from the diagonal beam to the west wall of the room. If the diagonal beam had a matching pair its joint is obscured by the rail. An iron pintle is fixed at the centre of the main beam and there are several defunct iron nails at irregular intervals.

The central beam is at its eastern end seated on the lintel of the eastern cross-window and at its west end is embedded in the wall, with carved step stops to each. It has a flat underside surface with chamfers to the flat sides. Several iron hooks are embedded in the sides of the beam. There is a possible iron bolt, partly hidden by the ceiling, off-centre to the south face. The timber appears to have been hewn to baulk and pit sawn.

To the west side of the chimney breast is a short beam partly embedded in the chimney at the east and in the external wall at the west. The end of the beam, where it meets the chimney, marks a line of height difference in the room's ceiling which is confined to the space between the central beam and the chimney.

To the east side of the chimney is another beam, roughly aligned with that on the opposing side (Fig 111). The beam is oak, square-profile with no chamfers at the edges though showing the undulating profile of the wane. Six rectangular slots are cut into the beam's underside and four joist slots, some with truncated joist ends *in situ*, are cut into each side. A matching beam, also with defunct slots on the underside and on the side, is positioned against the west wall spanning between the chimney and the east wall. This beam underlies a truss and partition recorded in the roof and first floor (Section 13.1). An undated sketch plan shows a probable mash tun in the north-east corner of the room adjacent to the fireplace with a flue passing through the fireplace wall (D(CA)473 undated). A smaller circular feature with southward flue is shown on the west side of the fireplace but could not be examined during this survey due to the book shelves.

The former Brewhouse, looking north-west Fig 109

The underside of Truss E4 and adjacent beam; note empty mortices on sides and underside surfaces Fig 110

Detail of tie beam stops Fig 111

8.6. Dining Room

The present form of the Dining Room is the creation of Edward Dryden as part of his 1710 alterations. Examination of house inventories suggests that in the 18th century the room was referred to as the Right Hand Parlour, Great Parlour and Best Parlour, changing to Dining Parlour on the 1819 inventory (Dibben 2017). It is a rectangular space measuring 5.4m x 8.15m, and with a floor to ceiling height of 3.6m. The room is accessed from the south-east via the tower landing and has a single fireplace centrally to the north wall, two sash windows to the west and three sash windows to the south.

The walls are covered in elaborate and well-built oak panelling with fluted Corinthian pilasters between the windows of the east wall and incorporating arched panels over a tilted landscape mirror set on the fireplace overmantle (Fig 116). The doorway is also rendered in the baroque style with a broken pediment and corbel, similar to the south tower door to the garden. It is noted in the 1980 architect's report that the condition of the panelling is "generally good but the portion between windows 44 and 45 [middle and eastern windows of the south wall] has been badly reinstated following repairs to the floor and wall above in recent years and further repair is now required (Bucknall and Melville 1980, 62)". It has been suggested that the panelling is reminiscent of the work of the Smiths of Warwick whom Pevsner described as being proponents of a 'staid' form of Baroque characterised by the use of giant pilasters, such as at Cottesbrooke Hall (1702-1713) (Bailey *et al*, 2013). The Smiths have also been recorded as being involved at Lamport, Fawsley and Deene (Bailey *et al* 2013). The 1998 guidebook posits that the quality of joinery in the house may indicate that the work was carried out by a master-carpenter such as Thomas Harris of Cublington who designed the prison and county hall at Aylesbury in 1720 (NT 1998, 15). References to 'Thomas Harris, Builder' are said to occur in Canons Ashby papers.

The fireplace is simple and elegant, built of grey marble, with straight sides and lintel, lightly beaded at the edges, and is surmounted by a thin marble shelf. The splays and fireback are brick-built and painted black, and the hearth is a single stone slab. Within the fireplace is a cast-iron fireback which was commissioned to commemorate the completion of the restorations and is a replica of an earlier one seen in historic photographs of the room. Adjacent to the fireplace is a speaking tube and servants' bell pulls. Pevsner has suggested that the marble fireplace in the Painted Parlour may be the work of the Smiths of Warwick. There are several fireplaces of similar design in the Tapestry Room, Spenser's Room, Nursery and the north-western private Sitting Room, and all were likely sourced from the same marble yard. The use of marble became commonplace in the Georgian period and fireplace surrounds became simpler, with square-headed openings and bolection moulding (Hall, 2011). A typical development in fireplace design was a reduction in the size of fire openings; the increased use of coal instead of wood required smaller openings with raised grates to burn more efficiently and coal-firing grates appeared from the 1720s (Calloway, 1994)

A photograph taken during the 1980s conservation works when the panelling was removed shows the underlying coursed stone walling with bonding timbers (CANT30GN, Fig 113). The sash windows can be seen to have long and short quoins at their edges, and although Gotch describes external evidence for a former window central to the west wall, no obvious evidence for a blocking can be seen in the photograph. At the base of the west wall, a beam, possibly with defunct joist slots, can be seen spanning below the southern window, crossing the central part of the room and presumably continuing underneath the northern window. It is known that the floor level was dropped 300mm by Edward when creating the new room and it is likely that this beam supported the joists. The underside edge of another beam can just be seen at ceiling level.

Bridges suggested that the room was “entirely floored and wainscoted with the timber of a single oak which grew in that lordship” (Bridges 1791, 223). While it is unlikely that the panelling was derived from the same tree, an examination of the floor during this survey was able to confirm that most if not all of the floor boards could indeed have been derived from the same parent tree, as described in the following paragraphs by the MOLA timber specialist, Dr Damian Goodburn.

Due to very slight shrinkage over many years, it was possible to see between the edges of some of the boards, and in other places small patches or ‘graving pieces’ had come loose and the features underneath were visible (Fig 115). The elaborate work involving, light but accurate jointing is joiner’s work akin to panelling rather than a simpler carpenter-made floor. The timber used for the floor boards is oak, generally, rather straight grained, of medium growth rate without any large knots. Most of the visible knots are small and often in clusters probably left by ‘epicormic shoots’. The upper surfaces of the boards were finely planed but had clearly originally been carefully pit-sawn out. The patterns visible in the grain and logistical considerations suggest that most, if not all the *c*24mm (1”) thick planking, was sawn out of saw baulks cut from a very large, rectangular, saw baulk. This initial baulk would have been either sawn into two length ways and the planks sawn from each half baulk or, probably more likely, sawn into four quarters of the initial baulk. The width of the finished floor boards, having no sapwood at between 220-240mm wide, suggests an initial baulk of *c*520mm square at the mid length. Without citing all the technical features in detail here, such as allowing for ‘what the saw takes’, shrinkage on seasoning (essential for this type of work) and other considerations, we can estimate that around 25 good quality boards up to 240mm wide could have been made from such an original baulk. This number matches what was found and matching patterns of distinctive knots in some of the boards seem to indicate an origin in the same ‘parent log’ for most, if not all the boards.

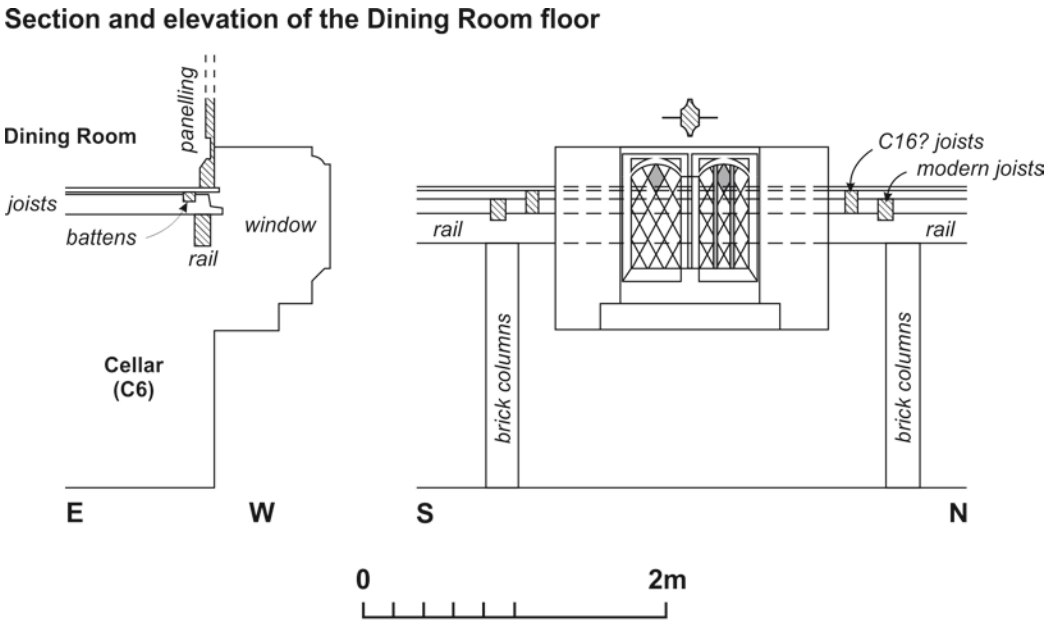
The great oak implied would have to have been straight and a minimum of around *c*0.8m diameter at about 5m up, and around 1.0m at chest height, and without large side branches for approximately 8.5m from the ground. It is likely that such a tree grew in the middle of a clump of large trees in a parkland setting where partial shade prevented large branches from developing low down. As the parent log for the saw baulk would have weighed approximately 3.5 tonnes or a little more and the squared baulk *c*1.75 tonnes it is quite likely that it was a local tree. Oaks of this size and form are rather rare today and would not have been common then, a reflection of the status of the owners of the house.

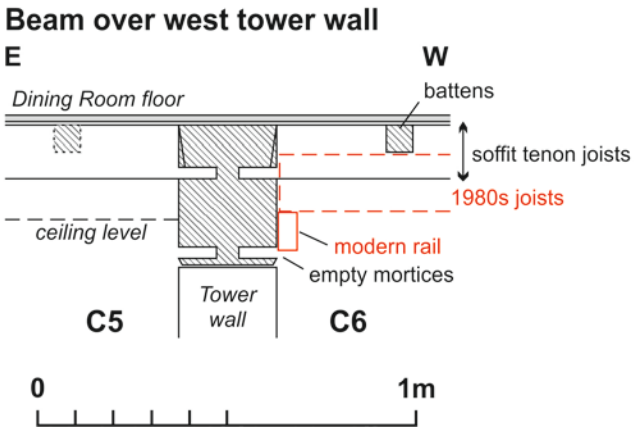
To keep the long boards very level an intricate joinery solution was used. Oak battens were found set running cross wise, in an undercut trench in the lower faces of the floor boards. These were *c*50mm wide by 10mm. The battens were set over the underlying joists; about 310mm from each batten oak dowels *c*10mm in diameter were fitted into the board edges. These two joinery features would have kept the floor surface linked together despite changes in humidity and also very level and smooth. It may be possible that this was done initially to provide a dance floor. This method of flooring appears a very rare and expensive way of going about this work. The skilled labour involved from the felling of the very large tree used up to the joinery work is also a considerable material expression of wealth alongside the size of the boards themselves. That the intricate construction has lasted for over around 300 years is also remarkable.

As noted previously, the dropping of the floor required the re-seating of the bridging beams and joists (Fig 112). The central beam was truncated at both ends and seated on stone pilasters and the joists were repositioned in the beam, exposing the empty mortices of the former joist arrangement. At the west side of the room, the joists which were formerly carried in the wall were supported over a beam held in front of the wall face. Since the lowered floor level overlaps the existing cellar windows it is possible to

see the back of the panelling and the supporting frame, as well as the ends of the floor boards by climbing onto the window sill (Fig 114).

Although no evidence for it is presently visible, a former doorway to the left of the present door was noted during the restoration works. The eastern wall is a stud frame with lath and plaster and the former door is described as a simple 16th century doorcase (NT 1998). A photograph of the wall with the underlying structure partly exposed confirms the lath and stud construction of the wall but the door is not visible (CANT33BLK). On the same view an area of brickwork is located adjacent to the Hall door.

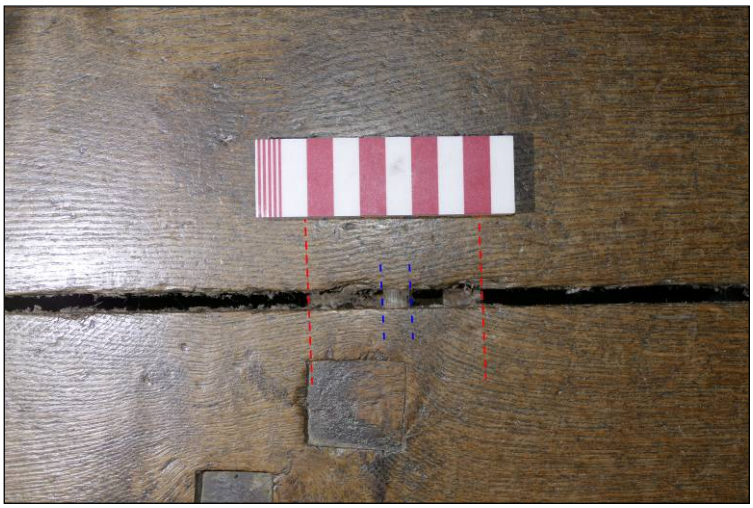




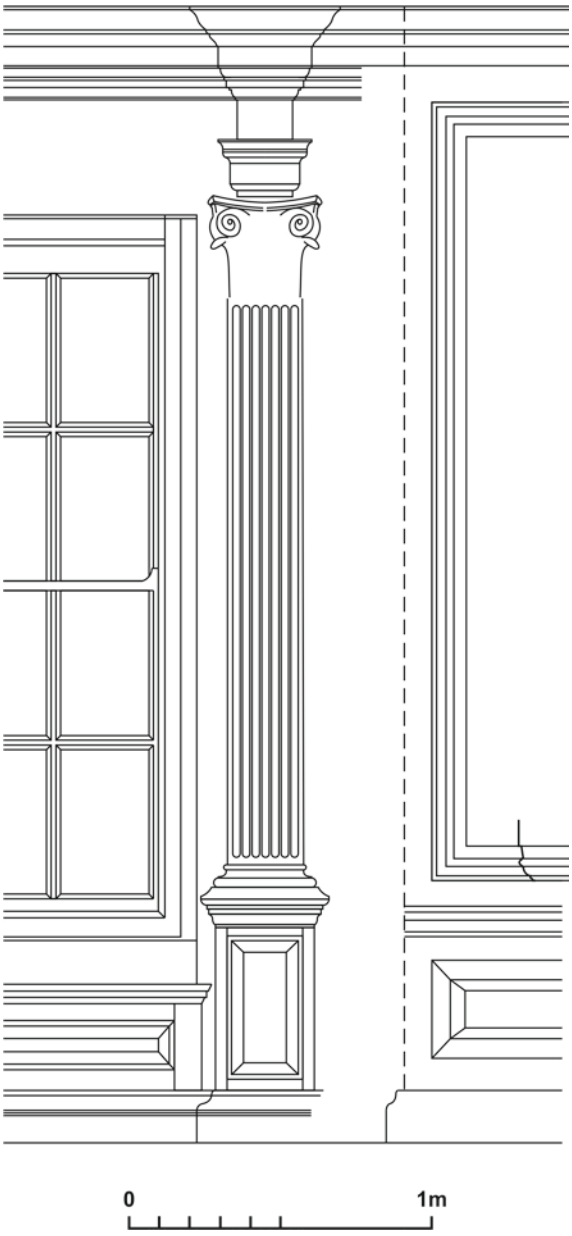
Details of the Dining Room floor support Fig 112

The south-west corner of the Dining Room with panelling removed (CANT30GN) Fig 113

View of the back of the panelling from the cellar, Room C6 Fig 114



Detail of the floorboards, showing graving pieces, and highlighting the underlying batten and dowel Fig 115



Detail of the Dining Room panelling Fig 116

8.7. The Book Room

The Book Room, previously the Left Hand Parlour, was named such by Sir Henry Dryden the Antiquary who designed and had built the neo-Gothic bookshelves which line the panelled walls. The room measures 8.1m x 5.8m and the floor to ceiling height is 3.1m.

The panelling is in the Jacobean style, comprised of small-square panelling with ovolo moulded tenoned and pegged stiles and rails and with a moulded dado at *c*1m. The walls are crowned with a moulded cornice but have a simple skirting scheme. A later scheme of panelling, approximately matching the main scheme is continued into the sash openings. The condition of the panelling at the time of conservation works was described as good and it was required to "remove the panelling of the south wall to carry out structural repairs but extensive repair will be required adjacent to window 49 and door 46 [eastern window and door to Painted Parlour] where severe water penetration has permitted damage by wet rot" (Bucknall and Melville 1980, 62). The panelling would need to have been modified to accommodate the later sash windows and a discrepancy in the panel direction can be seen in south-east corner of the room adjacent to the door.

In contrast to the rest of the room, the ceiling is plain with no decorative embellishment surviving and no mention of a former decorative scheme is recorded in historical documentary evidence.

The room's two doors are of the same design, being 18th century eight-panelled doors with fairly complex ovolo moulding to the panels and with lightly moulded architraves. Both doors are swung on H-hinges and have brass and iron rim locks.

The sash windows were inserted by Edward Dryden in the early 18th century and were possibly replaced or repaired by Sir Henry. The windows again required extensive repair and re-assembly during the conservation works due to their poor condition at that time. The windows have 18th century wooden shutters with diagonal iron bars and swung on H-hinges (Fig 235). The sill of each window forms a low window seat.

Centrally to the north wall is a decorative fireplace flanked by stacked columns, the lower pair rising from decorative plinths to a capital with egg and dart moulding, and the upper pair rising from toroidal bases and with Doric capitals below the cornice (Fig 117). The fireplace has a bolection moulded surround (Fig 232) and within is set a cast iron fire back with the Dryden coat of arms. Above the overmantle are two wooden panels representing an early Cope family marriage alliance, and it has been suggested that these were sourced from the former Cope house following its demolition in the late 17th century (NT 1998). The panels were lifted during conservation works to reveal an underlying plasterwork, likely 16th century, depicting three standing figures set within arched surrounds, and the figures have been identified as possible allegories of Faith, Hope, and Charity (CANT31RED, NT 1998). It has been recorded that the current uniform cream / white paint scheme of the fire surround hides an original scheme of marbling and painted decoration (NT 1998).

The thirty seven rows of oak floor boards are up to 4.5m in length and fairly narrow in width, between *c*140-150mm. They are laid E-W, parallel with the joists, thus requiring perpendicular battens as was also recorded on the floors of the Dining Room and Painted Parlour.

The removal of the panelling as part of the restoration works revealed a timber beam spanning the length of the south wall over the three sash windows of the Drawing Room and this has been interpreted as providing evidence for a large projecting bay spanning the full height of the house. No photographs of this feature were found during research for this survey. One photograph of the room with panelling removed shows the doorway between the Book Room and Painted Parlours and shows that the

partition wall between the two rooms is stone built with bonding timbers (CANT30RED, Fig 118)). Above the doorway lintel the wall is built up to the ceiling in brick and the underside of the beam carrying the timber partition of Spenser's Room overlies the bricks. It is unclear if the brickwork spans the full width of the wall or if it is limited to the area over the door.

The Book Room chimney piece Fig 117

1980s view of the room; note covered decorations on the chimney piece (CANT31RED) Fig 118

8.8. Painted Parlour and Conservation Room

> The last room on the ground floor is the Painted Parlour, now called Sir Henry's Museum Room, as it was used so in the C19. This is the latest of Edward Dryden's interior and a charming example of the talents of Elizabeth Creed, all the panelling and the Corinthian pilasters being painted in trompe l'oeil. The fireplace of a pale purplish marble is of a type often supplied by the Smiths of Warwick Marble Yard (Bailey *et al* 2013, 156).

This is a fairly small room measuring 5.2m x 4.7m, with a floor to ceiling height of 3.2m. The current decorative scheme is entirely early 18th century, comprising illusory or trompe l'oeil painted panelling with fluted Corinthian columns crowned with a cornice. These elements are simply flat cut pieces but provide a convincing false perspective. The work has been attributed to Edward Dryden's cousin Elizabeth Creed, likely with assistance from Elizabeth Steward, who was also responsible for the paintwork in the Hall. The plain white ceiling provides a strong contrast to the dark paint scheme.

Off-centre to the north wall is a simple marble fire surround with stone hearth, and an elaborate cast-iron fireback. The fireplace has straight plain jambs with beading at the edges and a straight plain lintel, lightly arched at the underside. Similar fireplaces can be found in the Tapestry Room and Spenser's Room and likely date to the early 18th century.

The floor is comprised of twenty three rows of sycamore boards, *c*230mm wide and up to 2m in length. These are modern replacements to the original sycamore boards which had suffered severe beetle infestation (Bucknall and Melville 1980).

The two sash windows have panelled wooden shutters swung on H-hinges and can be secured by diagonal iron shutter bars. The window sills form short seats.

In the north-east corner of the room is a fairly inconspicuous eight-panelled door of similar design to doors between the Tower, Book Room and Painted Parlour. This leads through an awkwardly angled passage into a small store room currently used for conservation. The room is largely occupied with shelving and is plain and white painted and the only window is blocked with boarding.

The Painted Parlour Fig 119

8.9. Great Hall

The west range was constructed by John Dryden following the construction of the Tower House, in order to connect it to the north-west block. The creation of this range resulted in the formation of an H-plan house displaying the characteristic late / post-medieval plan form of Hall with screens passage and service range beyond. The siting and dimensions of the west range were predetermined by the positions of the existing ranges to the north and south and the internal floor levels needed to match up with those already in existence in the tower house and in the farmhouse.

The Hall measures 6.1m x 11.5m and has a floor to ceiling height of 4.2m. The walls are painted a pale tan colour and are plain with no painted or carved embellishment save for the white painted moulded cornice which is interrupted at the windows, and a simple black painted skirting scheme. The ceiling is likewise plain plaster and paint with a central moulded plaster quatrefoil surrounding the fixing point for the central light.

The floor is a chequer board of pale limestone intermixed with smaller dark marlstone blocks (Sutherland 2003). The mixing of these contrasting stones was a popular flooring style in gentry houses of the 18th century as described by John Morton in 1712:

> The stone of greatest note as to fineness of grain in all the western part of the county, is that from Culworth Quarry, which is almost white; and that from Byfield Quarry, of a dark colour, almost black. Both of these may be wrought to a considerable degree of smoothness, so as nearly to approach a polish. The halls of most of the gentlemen's houses in that part of the county are paved with these two alternately set in squares, in the usual manner of paving with block and white marble (Morton 1712, 108)

The flooring was added by Edward Dryden during his *c*1710 alterations as part of which works he removed a dais at the southern side of the room and inserted the vaulted brickwork of the cellar to support his new floor. During archaeological recording an unrelated survey of the floor condition took place in which several of the flagstones were lifted. This provided an opportunity to examine the underlying material and it was found that the flags are set onto a layer of sand over wooden boards.

In the north-west and north-east corners of the hall are two opposing external entrances, a common medieval plan form which persisted into the post-medieval period, though modified and adapted to new domestic planning arrangements. It has been suggested that the Hall formerly had a screens passage to enclose the doors, thus preventing draughts, and while this may the case, no physical evidence for such an arrangement can at present be seen. It has also been suggested that a balcony or platform may have been placed over the screens passage with entry through the adjacent room (Cook's Room). No evidence for such a platform remains, and whilst traces of former door hinges may be seen on the panelling that forms the west wall of the servant's room, such marks are inconclusive given the widespread recycling of materials and panelling in the house.

Centrally to the north wall is a pair of blocked four-centred arch stone doorways which were labelled by Sir Henry as doors to Buttery and Kitchen (D(CA)470b Undated, Fig 120). One of the key questions of this survey was to determine if these doors were ever functional doors to the rooms beyond or merely provided the Hall with the appearance of medieval antiquity. The door heads and outer jambs are built of uniform, fine grained pale purple red sandstone of the same type utilised on the room's fireplace and the doors. The inner jambs share a common pier of variable composition including ironstone and pale yellow sandy limestone. The jambs have block plinths with straight stops to a chamfered edge rising to pumpkin mouldings. Shortly above these the doors

have ogee ovolo chamfer mouldings of the same form as recorded on the external doors and fireplace (Fig 232). The corners of the door arches have plain recessed spandrels. The uniform design of the doorways is spoiled somewhat by the polychrome central pier and by two small blocks, one dark grey-brown, the other deep orange which strongly contrast with the paler stonework of the door heads. Two capital L letters are carved into the pair of stone blocks framing the eastern door (Fig 121). A cluster of graffiti including a possible Marian mark can be seen on the paler stones at the middle of the central pier along with a possible ladder mark (Fig 122).

Towards the base of the left jamb of the western doorway can be seen the remains of a square iron hook, embedded in the stonework, along with a square section of wood embedded in a hole in the stone. Another such hook and fragment of wood are located a short way above, where the chamfer begins. A square block of wood is likewise embedded at the base of the central pier on its south face. It is unclear if these features relate to former door fastenings as no such features are on the eastern door. All four jambs have a small round hole gouged into the stonework at a level height of *c*1.4m and these holes face one another in each opening.

At the east side of the north wall is the door to the kitchen. This an 18th-century two-panel oak door onto which combed wood grain has been applied. The reverse side of the door is formed of planks with beaded edges. An 18th-century spring latch is installed on the rear side of the door. The wooden fastener for a previous latch is located alongside. The door is swung on 17th or 18th-century strap hinges with fleur de lys ends, of the same style as are installed on the tower door to the garden. The fixing point for a bell wire is installed over the door. At the west side of the north wall is a door to the passageway which leads to the Servants Hall. This door is in the same style as that to the kitchen.

In the south-west corner of the room, the door between the hall and tower is a six-panel door with round head. The door is fairly plain with little moulding save for a light chamfer at the edges of the south face of the panels. Combed wood grain has been applied to the door.

Centrally to the east wall is a stone-built four-centered arch fireplace with the same ogee, ovolo and chamfer moulding style as on the doors, confirming that these features comprise a matching suite of the same date (Fig 123, 124, 232). Except for the northern arch stone the fireplace is constructed of a pale purple-red, uniform and fine-grained sandstone. A capital L is carved into the left jamb. The fireplace has a raised stone kerb with hollow moulded edges and a flagstone hearth. The back and sides of the fire opening are formed of well-dressed coursed stone of a deep orange brown, though smoke blackened.

Above the fireplace is a large overmantle painting by Elizabeth Creed who also decorated the Painted Parlour, and a variety of arms and armaments are hung from the wall.

The door between the Hall and Pebble Court is externally set within a stone surround with four-centered arched head. The ogee, ovolo and chamfer moulding of the surround is the same as on the opposing door to the Green Court. The upper pair of the six panels are rounded to match the door head. Externally the panels have chamfered edges and the rails and stiles are plain. Internally the panels are flush and the rails and stiles have beaded edges. The door is swung on 18th-century L-hinges with decorative ends. The door has a rim lock, and two sliding bolts are installed at the top and bottom of the lock stile. A timber drawbeam with carved locking peg provides additional security to the house.

The door to the Green Court is a double door, each leaf with five fielded panels of alternating size and with beaded edges to the rails and stiles. The door is oak with

combed wood grain and is swung on L-plan hinges with decorative ends. The left hand door has a manual locking system with a pair of vertical bars with teeth that interact with a central gear. The door is also secured by means of a timber drawbeam housed in the wall. In the upper corner of the door opening is a curved iron stay to hold the northern door when opened. The southern door can be held open by a small hook fixed to the skirting.

The room is lit by three tall transom windows with ovolo moulding, two windows flanking the fireplace on the east wall, and one to the west overlooking Green Court. The eastern windows measure 3.2m in height and 1.6m in width, and are set in tall reveals which rise to the ceiling but stop short of the floor, creating window seats (Fig 234). The transoms are off-set to a height of *c*2.2m from the sills, providing tall lower lights and comparatively small upper lights. Within each light is a central stanchion and saddle bars are placed at mid-height to the lower lights. The windows have diamond pattern lead glazing with the quarry's measuring 300mm x 190mm. The western windows are of approximately the same dimensions but the transoms are set at mid-height rather than off-set. As noted in Section 5.2, the west-facing windows of the West Range were reduced in width, likely in around 1710.

The north wall of the Hall, showing active doors and blocked Tudor doorways Fig 120

Possible Masons mark on Tudor door head Fig 121

Detail of graffiti on the Tudor doorway pier Fig 122

The Hall fireplace Fig 123

Detail of the fireplace moulding with possible Masons mark Fig 124

8.10. Great Kitchen

The Kitchen has an irregular, roughly L-shaped plan with a variable height ceiling, this irregularity being the result of the expansion and rearrangement of the former farmhouse. The Kitchen floor is *c*1m lower than that in the Hall and an oak stair spans between the two. The stair has a decorative *c*17th-century half-newel post and 17th century splat balusters. Adjacent to the stair is an elevated storage alcove built from re-used panelling with beaded edges and runout moulding. The panelling appears to have been installed upside down to the original design as the chamfered dust ledges, usually at the bottom, are at the top side of the panels. The half newel post would originally have been placed against a wall and its position at the bottom of the stair indicates its reuse. The alcove formed at the back of the blocked Tudor door into the Hall has been panelled. A drawing of the kitchen balusters was produced by Sir Henry Dryden in 1895 (D(CA)473 1895).

Below the alcove and to the side of the stair to the Hall is another stair which descends to the Hall cellar (Figs 125, 126). The stair has flagstone treads, much worn from use and the sides of the stair are plastered and painted. A re-used handrail from which the balusters have been cut, spans between the half-newel post and the door jamb. A metal pipe emerges from the right door jamb and runs horizontally alongside the stair and connects to a nearby speaking tube. Bell wires emerge from the top corner of the door and are pivoted upwards to connect to labelled bells. The door is formed of three oak planks braced with horizontal rails, modern replacements, and is swung on iron strap hinges with leaf shaped ends. The door surround has a moulded ovolo section with raised central arris which drops to a spade-like raised carving. The moulded edges terminate at moulded ogee bar stops. The door is secured from within the kitchen by a sliding bolt and a modern rimlock is installed on the cellar face. Fragments of a possible former cream on brown paint scheme survive on the left jamb.

The top of the cellar door is aligned with a hollow moulded plinth course that spans the west wall to the stone pier. This line is also level with the top of the Pantry cellar wall and the short walls recorded underneath the stair to the Servants' Hall and mezzanine level rooms. At the same level, on the opposite side of the room, is a cupboard built into the wall adjacent to the Hall stair (Fig 127). The cupboard is enclosed by a door of reused panelling with a more elaborate moulding than most seen elsewhere in the house (Fig 232). The door is swung on late 16th or 17th-century cockshead hinges and a moulded rail, likely reclaimed from panelling, is fixed over the top of the back wall (Fig 233). The back wall is coursed rubble with lime mortar and is plastered over. The south side of the cupboard, however, is built of 17th-century bricks which appear to pass behind the stone wall that forms the back of the cupboard. Across the top of the cupboard is a timber lintel.

The masonry pier in the kitchen is an unusual feature whose origins and purpose has been the cause of much debate. It has an irregular section presenting a 1m wide flat face to the kitchen and is chamfered to the adjoining staircase at the north-west. At *c*1m from the ground is a roll and hollow moulded string course that continues into the under stair space, and there is a similar moulding to the capital. As with many of the features in the house it is unclear if the pier was built for here, in order to provide an atmosphere of antiquity or, if the stonework was imported, perhaps having been recycled from the former Cope house which was described as having a lower storey supported by columns of stone, wrought after the Gothic manner (Bridges 1791). The pier does not reach the Kitchen ceiling and instead supports a timber beam that spans to the north wall and supports the floor above. As described in Section 10.5 the pier was inserted to support a timber-frame bay whose lower corner was removed to allow the enlargement of the kitchen. On his drawing of this element, Henry Dryden describes it simply as *Pillar in the Kitchen* (D(CA)742 1884).

At floor level, adjacent to the pier is a double door access hatch to the under stair space. The hatch doors appear to be recycled panelling with moulded edges and chamfered dust ledges, and both are swung on pairs of 17th-century butterfly hinges (Fig 233). The inner edges of the panels are axe-trimmed to fit grooves in the frame.

The Kitchen floor is comprised of a mixture of flagstones, most worn, smoothed and hollowed from use. Similar to the stone floor of the Hall, these comprise fossiliferous Byfield marlstone and the pale yellow Culworth limestone, though less well shaped and fragmented from use. The darker stones form a rough border around the paler stones at the centre of the floor.

The east wall of the Kitchen is dominated by three arches, one containing a cooking range (Fig 128). The current cast iron range was installed by the National Trust during the 1980s conservation works. The arches are separated by ashlar piers and have ashlar blockwork openings with raised keystones. The central arch opening is wider than the others and also a little lower. The southern archway forms a doorway to the adjacent corridor of the north range (Section 8.1). The rear of the range is lined with red brick in Flemish bond, with rubble coursing forming the flue. A square flue, blocked in brick and plastered over is located over the right side of the central arch. This feature is visible on the 1921 photographs of the house and also in a photograph taken during conservation works (CANT16RED). In this photograph a pair of vertical lines are visible in the brickwork though it is uncertain what these lines relate to. Modern brick repairs are visible within the flues and a number of iron bars have been inserted. A similar arrangement of small arches flanking a wider central arch containing the range can be found in the Kitchen at Quenby Hall, Leicestershire (1615-20), a room which also reflects the Kitchen at Canons Ashby in its double height ceiling. An 1869 measured plan and section of the Kitchen range is annotated as follows: "Kitchen range put up by Brettells of Northampton about 1840; Taken down 1869 & close range by Mobbs of Northampton substituted in 1869" (D(CA)471 1869).

In the north-east corner of the room the east and north walls are joined by an angled projection with a truncated timber sill at its base. This continues up to the ceiling where it is aligned with the angled fireplace in the Staff Room (Section 9.9). In the opposite corner a sloped projection at the top of the east wall marks the base of the stair up to the landing outside the Staff Room (Fig 129).

Between the tall north-facing windows is a square pier that projects into the room and rises from floor to ceiling, enclosing a flue that serves a pair of stewing hearths. The tall opening set into the east side of the flue has an ashlar arched head with projecting keystone, matching those of the main cooking ranges. At the base of the pier's south face is a small opening which crosses to the stewing hearths where it rises vertically and is enclosed by an iron grate.

In the north-west corner of the room is a bread oven (Fig 130). Like the nearby pier with stewing hearths, the bread oven is built into an ashlar faced block which projects into the room from the north wall. The oven has an external surround comprising a single-piece lintel, brick sill, and blockwork jambs on the west side. The east jamb is formed by the wall coursing. Set back within the opening is the secondary arched brick opening beyond which is the circular bread oven with domed ceiling. The walls and ceiling of the oven are lined with bricks, set headers inwards, and the oven has a brick floor. A curving iron bar has been set below the arched opening. The dimensions of the bricks suggest a 17th-century date.

The chamfered edge of a former wider opening is located immediately beside the stone jamb of the external oven surround and is continued down to the ground. Due to the plasterwork it was not possible to see if this line continues upward past the level of the bread oven. There is no matching line to define the eastern side of a former feature and it is possible that the vertical join marks a return to the west wall. The 1980s plan

of the building in the architects' report shows that a cupboard was formerly located in this corner of the room and was removed during the restoration works (Bucknall and Melville 1980).

The masonry stack containing the Winter Parlour chimney projects into the north-east corner of the kitchen, adjacent to the door to the Larder stair. This wall is plastered and appears featureless; however tapping on the wall suggests a possible blocked opening. As discussed in Section 8.12, a possible blocked opening at the back of the Winter Parlour fireplace may suggest an earlier oven arrangement in this area.

In the area closest to the Hall, the floor to ceiling height is *c*3.3m and this increases to 5.3m upon entering the main part of the room. At the corner of the room where the two courtyard walls meet the stonework is exposed and is seen to comprise mixed dressed rubble in lime mortar. Towards the top of the exposed stonework is a truncated beam with defunct joist slots. It has been suggested that this timber with its empty joist slots represents a former floor level and remains *in situ*; certainly this survey has concluded that rooms were removed to enlarge the Kitchen to its present height, however these rooms would have been level with the existing mezzanine level rooms and this truncated timber is a little too low to match that level unless the floor was stepped down. It is also possible that this is a reused beam utilised as a bonding timber however no other beams can be seen in the room and it is located close enough to the level of the former rooms that the possibility of it being *in situ* is worth consideration.

The walls enclosing the stair to the first floor are plastered lath and stud partitions. The studs and the majority of the timberwork forming the stair support are re-used timbers displaying v-shaped grooves, empty peg holes and mortice slots from their former use. The brick floor surface in this area is set at a higher level than the flagstone floor of the kitchen. An octagonal newel post forms the primary vertical stair support up to the mezzanine corridor and it is set into a timber sill. The stair is discussed in greater detail in Section 10.1.

The door between the Kitchen and adjacent corridor of the north range is a plank and batten door with applied fillets forming six panels. The fillets are ovolo moulded with grooved central recess, a form commonly used from the 16th century through to the first half of the 17th century (Hall 2011, Fig 232). The door is swung on 16th-century strap hinges with expanded ends. It is secured by a small sliding bolt on the corridor side and a much larger sliding bolt to the kitchen, both likely 16th or 17th century, and has a 17th-century iron latch with a decorative drop handle.

The Kitchen, steps from the Hall and to the Cellar Fig 125

Steps down to the Cellar Fig 126

Recessed cupboard adjacent to kitchen stairs Fig 127

The eastern half of the Kitchen Fig 128

The Kitchen, looking west, showing the mezzanine corridor and north stair case Fig 129

The bread oven; note vertical join at the left side Fig 130

8.11. Pantry

This area is at the north-west of the Hall and bounded to the east by the Kitchen. At present the space is comprised of a corridor and small adjacent room however this is a 19th-century alteration and the area formerly comprised a single room with access to the Hall and Servant's Hall.

The corridor is lit by the lower part of the tall stone mullion window which also lights the Cook's Room above. The ceiling is angled upward where it meets the window in order to maximise light.

The room has a red quarry tile floor which partly carries through into the adjacent room. The partition wall between the two rooms is angled to span between the two doorways at the north and south and thus cuts across the line of the tiles which are set perpendicular to the space. In the adjacent room the quarry tiles are set in a red and black chequerboard pattern.

The small room is currently used for storage and has 19th-century cupboards at one end and modern bookshelves around the remainder of the wall space. Electrical switches and fuse boxes are set against the partition wall.

At the north end of the corridor the floor is stepped up to the lobby adjacent to the Winter Parlour.

8.12. Winter Parlour / Servants' Hall

A small irregular-plan lobby space is located before the Winter Parlour, with access from the Winter Parlour, the north-west stair to the mezzanine, and also from the corridor in the former Pantry (Fig 132). To the north the lobby is bounded by the enclosed alcove behind the panelling of the Winter Parlour. The lobby is *c*0.95m in width and a maximum of 1.7m in length, with a floor to ceiling height of *c*2m. The lobby area overlies part of the under-stair space in the Kitchen where the floor is seen to be supported by an array of re-used joists and frame members. The south wall, which separates the lobby from the adjacent Pantry / Corridor, is part of the timber-framed bay and two joists cross the length of the lobby, jointed to the tie beam. A third longitudinal timber frames the door to the adjacent stair and joins to a post at the corner of the room. The two joists are set at an angle to the south wall and the middle joist stops at a trimmer joist spanning between the corner post and the side of the adjacent joist. The partitioning wall at the side of the Winter Parlour alcove extends at an angle from the corner post.

To the Pantry is a plank door with applied fillets forming nine tall rectangular panels. The fillets are nailed to the door and tenoned into each other; they have an elaborate moulding pattern comprising ovolo mouldings with linear grooves in the deep centre channels. Traces of paintwork suggest that parts of the moulding were formerly picked out in blue paint. A similar moulding pattern can be seen on the panelling which forms a suspended cupboard adjacent to the Kitchen entrance. Fillet mouldings were common in the later 16th and first half of the 17th centuries, going out of fashion by the second half of the 17th century (Hall 2011).

The door is swung on crude pintle-mounted iron strap hinges with plain squared ends and has an iron sliding bolt secured to the door by two hasps. The bolt has a small knob and is decorated with vertical grooves and patterns of shallow indentations (Fig 233). A rim lock was formerly attached to the door and several key holes are also present suggesting a number of different locking mechanisms. The door is opened by an iron lifting latch which passes through a groove in the outer vertical fillet. A drop handle with small decorative plate is set on the other side of the door. The pivot has a spearhead design and is secured by an iron split pin. The hasp and latch are quite

decorative with incised crosses, groups of perforations and linear grooves. The bolt and latch suggest an early to mid 17th-century date.

The door to the Winter Parlour is a six-panel door with tenoned and pegged, beaded and chamfered rails and stiles and runout moulding. The drop handle lifting latch is similar in design to that on the nearby door to the Pantry but lacking decorative work and the door is swung on H-hinges with expanded ends. The panel boards are set in grooves in the frame and the edges are trimmed to fit the grooves.

The room measures 5.2m x 4.2m and has a floor to ceiling height of 3.3m. The room is characterised by its painted panelling displaying a coat of arms, heraldic element, or symbolic motif in each panel, with improving Latin couplets set below the cornice (Figs 133-136). There is a wide twelve-light ovolo mullion bay window to the north and a three-light ovolo mullion window to the south. A four-centred Tudor fireplace is set in the north-east corner of the room.

The floorboards are aligned east to west and are carried on the bridging beam and joists which are visible in the Larder (Section 7.11). The profile of the bridging beams and the materials and production process evident on the beam and joists suggests a date of 16th or 17th century for those elements. The boards are a patchwork of recent and old repair as well as possible original boards. The oldest looking boards are pit-sawn oak and the oldest looking repairs are pit-sawn elm. The more recent repairs are in elm and conifer.

The panelling comprises nine rows of rectangular panels of variable proportions to a height of *c*3m (Fig 131). These are surmounted by elongated panels below an ogee and step moulded cornice. The rails and stiles are tenon and pegged and their edges are bolection moulded with deep ogee curves stepped to the flat surface plane. The lower part of each panel is a chamfered dust ledge. The room was downgraded to a servants' dining room in the early 18th century and the decorative scheme was hidden under layers of cream paint. It was rediscovered and restored in the 1980s.

In addition to the symbolic motifs, the main decorative elements are not strictly heraldic but instead comprise the shields and devices which appear to represent significant family connections to the Copes and it has been suggested that the overall scheme celebrates the marriage of John Dryden to Elizabeth Cope. The panels have yellow painted fields with black edging, and the crests are set in strapwork and scrollwork cartouches. The various painted devices are fairly detailed in their execution, with particular detail on animal or figurine motifs. Several are accompanied by Latin inscriptions. The framing members are decorated with flowers and arabesque designs reminiscent of those surviving on the wooden panels flanking the large window in the Tapestry Room. There are numerous examples where the framing decoration is truncated or mismatched between framing pieces, or where vertical or horizontal members are misaligned and it is clear that the panelling has been altered to fit the room (Fig 137).

The Latin inscriptions provide a variety of moralistic phrases and several appear to have been re-written or repainted, showing overlapping lettering and words.

> The subject matter is classical and heraldic. The quotation of authors from antiquity such as Seneca (as here in the top frieze of the panelling, offering injunctions to healthy and moral living) was the mark of an educated Renaissance man, and something to which the puritanical leanings of both Cope and Dryden families would have warmed. Emblems containing rebuses and allegories feature in some of the other panels and would have amused, instructed, and impressed the Drydens and their guests. Such entertainments were commonly included in the decoration of Elizabethan Great Chambers – a far later (and far grander) example is to be found in the plaster frieze of the

> High Great Chamber at Hardwick Hall which is full of allegory and word play with which, and by which, the educated Elizabethan mind was amused and entertained (Barber 2018).

An example of the phrases reads: Imago Animi Sermo, “Conversation of the mirror of the soul”, and another: Lauda Parce, Vitupera Parcius; Illa Siquidem Adulatione, Ista Malignatate Suspecta Est, “Praise sparingly, criticise more sparingly, or you will be accused either of flattery of malice” (NT 2016, 21).

The timber used for the panelling appears to be of a very atypical species for such work. The common materials used for panelling in 16th to early 17th-century middle and higher status houses is commonly of unpainted, radially split (or ‘cleft’, occasionally sawn-out) oak. In later 17th and 18th-century buildings this was often supplanted by boards of sawn and planed pine which was normally painted from the start. However, neither of these materials was used in the Servants Hall in the areas that could be closely examined. The panelling has been painted but sections of the hidden unpainted face could be seen. The species used was impossible to identify visually with certainty. The timber varied in colour from red through brown to cream and appeared to have an interlocked grain. These features suggest that it might have been some form of imported tropical mahogany-type species known in some fine 18th century furniture. Another possibility might be walnut, the heartwood of which can resemble a brown mahogany and the sapwood is a creamy white, it also has interlocked grain. Finally, some form of fruitwood species might have been used. The raw materials used for the panelling would suggest an 18th-century date; if the panels do indeed date to the mid 16th century these materials would be unusual indeed, though it has been noted that certain of the building materials used in John Dryden’s building efforts were imported from outside of the County.

The rear face of the panelling had been left unsmoothed by planing with clear tool marks left by the preparation of the ‘exotic’ interlocked grain timber. The panel boards had been sawn out manually whilst the frame pieces, stiles, and rails etc. had been cleft and axe or hatchet-trimmed. As the timber species had awkward interlocked grain a very rough finish resulted on the framing elements and it seems surprising that the material was not entirely sawn out. The painted faces had been planed after rough cutting. The use of an exotic timber and the elaborate nature of the panelling suggest that it was intended for a fairly high status room.

It is evident that the panelling did not originate from this room but was fitted to the space following the creation of the room. As will be discussed in Section 14.1, the current room represents the merging and enlargement of rooms at a former ground and first floor now represented by the rooms forming the Mezzanine level and partly surviving in the enclosed alcove above the lobby. The decorative scheme and materials utilised would suggest that the panelling was built for one of the large entertaining rooms in the Tower House – those now comprising the Dining and Tapestry Rooms.

The panelling at the base of the bay window is of a different material to the main panelling, with a different decorative scheme, and is unlikely to have originated from the same room. It instead resembles the southern cupboard door which is itself comprised of re-used panelling. The framing pieces are tenon and pegged and the edges have simple beading, chamfered dust ledges and runout moulding. Scribed layout marks are visible. The decorative designs have largely faded but appear to comprise heraldic shields. The panelling over the western splayed reveal has been installed upside down as evident by the shields being upside down and a single candle taper burn which tapers downwards. The main panelling scheme is continued into the splayed reveals of the bay and has been crudely cut away to accommodate the sill.

The west wall has only a central strip of panelling, four panels wide, which is flanked by a pair of shallow alcoves. The panelling does not comprise a uniform scheme and the lower southern part is disconnected from the wider scheme and the lower rails are misaligned. This section of the panelling was formerly hung from its side on the wall opposite to the Great Hall fireplace and was returned to the Winter Parlour when the painted decoration was revealed (NT 1998). Since the panelling of the Winter Parlour is not original to the room, it may be that this central strip, formerly in the Hall, was never actually brought into the Winter Parlour. The alcoves formerly housed sash windows whose external architraves remain in situ externally to the wall. A stone mullion window was formerly located centrally to the wall and was blocked when the windows were inserted, likely in around 1710. The remains of this window were noted by Gotch when the render of the west elevation was stripped in 1906.

The panelling is continued over the top of the southern window as a narrow band about half the width of the main panels. The heraldic designs appear to fit the smaller dimensions of these panels and the dimensions are also respected by the arabesque patterns on the frames. It would appear therefore that although the overall scheme is imported, this part of the panelling was designed to fit a window as part of the original design. This would suggest that the current window may have been built to fit the dimensions provided by the panelling. The window reveals are splayed to sill level but below this they are continued to ground perpendicular to the wall. The splayed reveals are covered by 18th or 19th-century panels. A folding table resembling plain wainscot is installed below the window. The table is comprised of oak boards and rises flush with the sill. It was not possible to see the hinge points. When raised the table is held in place by sliding bolts which are secured into holes in the panelling of the reveals. The wall below the window is plastered and a timber beam spans across the top below the sill.

A shallow cupboard is built into the south wall between the window and door. The cupboard door comprises re-used panelling with two rows of four raised and fielded panels with tenon and pegged framing with runout and ovolo moulding and chamfered dust ledges. The door is 1.84m tall and 470mm wide by 25m (1”) thick, including later sawn extension strips added to the top and bottom. At the top of the door is an H-hinge with expanded ends whilst a cockshead hinge is installed lower down (Fig 233). The door is held closed by means of a simple pivoting piece of wood. The cupboard interior is plain and the ceiling and wall at the back are boarded. A wooden rail with wooden pegs is fixed to the top of the back wall. The cupboard is recessed into the external wall, and if it is a later alteration, the creation of the recess seems like a lot of effort to go through for such a shallow feature. It has been considered whether the cupboard was formerly a doorway however the wall of the west range is set centrally to the cupboard and a doorway here would require a completely different interpretation of the development and phasing of the house.

The frame elements of the cupboard door, *c*86mm wide, are of cleft and hewn oak that was planed but some ‘as-cleft’ surface was still visible. The panel boards, set in grooves in the frame, were *c*280mm wide and of radially cleft, axe-trimmed oak. The radial faces of the oak have the typical attractive ray ‘figure’. Radially cleft panels of this size have to be cleft from large, straight, oak logs a minimum of 0.8m diameter, split into 32 sections or more. Boards made this way were also very dimensionally stable and ideal for panels, barrel staves, and boat planks, where this characteristic was particularly important. This material was made in England up until the 17th century but much was also imported from areas with more large oaks, growing in blocks of tall dark woodland such as those of the south-east Baltic hinterland. The raw materials and working evidence suggest that this feature was originally of 16th to early 17th-century date then reused in the 18th to early 19th century. The panels were formerly painted and traces of borders and figures and shields may be seen, however these have

significantly faded. It is possible that the former design might be made visible with the help of specialist photography.

The fireplace is set within a section of panelling which clearly post-dates the main scheme and was built for its location rather than re-used. The panelling is in the small-panel style and although it might be earlier, is reminiscent of the mid 19th and early-20th century approach to such work, as has been recorded at Hellidon Grange (Soden and Walker 2012). The fireplace has a four-centred arch opening with elaborate moulding of a near identical moulding pattern to the fireplace in the Sitting Room above, and has small shields and oak leaves carved into the spandrels (Fig 232).

The fire opening has been substantially reduced with late 17th / early 18th-century bricks painted black, forming an opening *c*0.8m in width and also raised by two courses from the hearth level using the same brick type (Fig 136). Similar bricks, also painted black, are set within the fireplace in the Dining Room, suggesting that the blocking was carried out during Edward Dryden's works of *c*1710. At the back of the flue is a pointed arch formed of stones set diagonally, and above the arch are long narrow bricks, likely 16th-century in date. Below the arch are bricks of a larger dimension to those above the arch and these appearing to represent a blocking of the arched opening. It is unclear how an arched opening, which is off-set from the chimney flue would have functioned and it is possible that this may represent an earlier oven which was accessed from the opposite direction, i.e. through the Kitchen. Although the back of the chimney presents a plain and featureless face to the kitchen, tapping on the wall suggests that there is a possible void which may confirm the presence of an earlier oven arrangement. The hearth is comprised of closely set stone slabs of a dark colour, with small paler stones set towards the back of the hearth. A cast iron grateback, with a vase and flowing leaf and flower design, is set in the fireplace. Its design is very similar to that recorded in the Drawing Room which is also set within a four-centred fireplace.

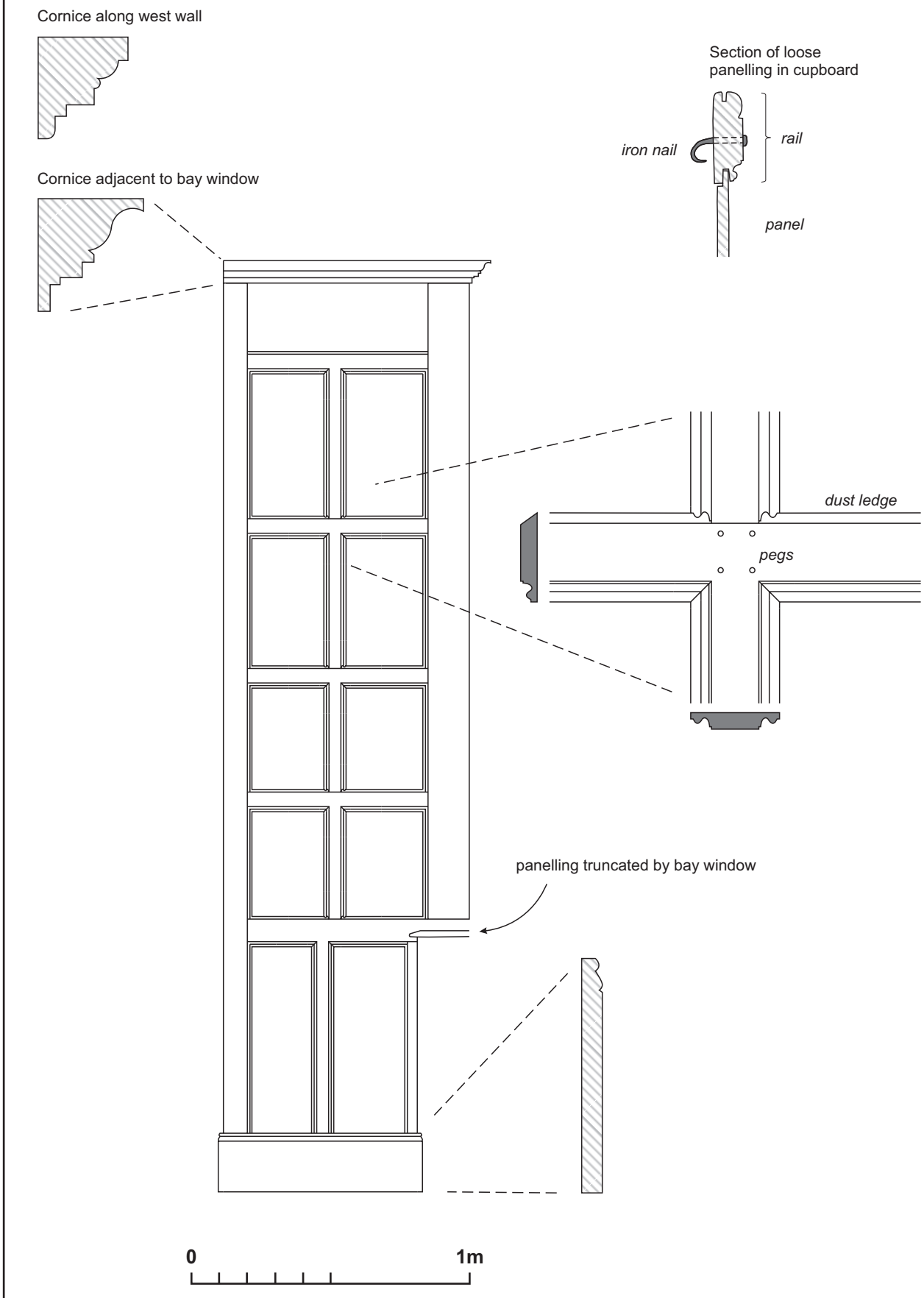
The fireplace is set back from the underlying masonry wall of the cellar and the flue is set into a masonry core which rises to the ceiling and stops below the Sitting Room at first floor. In order for the flue to connect to the chimney it has to be steeply angled northward into the north wall and rise as a vertical pipe within the wall.

Adjacent to the entrance door, and incorporated into the panelling, are a pair of stacked alcoves often referred to as the buffet. These project backward from the wall and into an enclosed void or alcove hidden behind the panelling. The alcoves each measure approximately 0.8m square and are *c*300mm deep, with reduced, slightly arched openings. The lower alcove is raised *c*200mm from the floor and the alcove surround comprises flat straight sides with a flat crown lightly arched to meet the sides. The surround is painted yellow with black lines picking out the edges. The surround appears to be missing small elements that would have separated the sides from the crown. Black painted compasses over white scrolls are placed into the corner of the surround and square pegs picked out with white paint are set in the 'spandrels'. The back and sides of the alcove are boarded. The upper alcove is of similar dimensions but has a more elaborately decorated surround comprising fluted 'pilasters', cabled at the lower halves, forming the sides of the surround and with the crown edge being decorated with rounded crenellations (Fig 139). The background colour is yellow and the fluting is picked out in black and red. Twisted rope designs separate the sides from the crown element and as noted on the lower alcove a pair of strips which would have separated the two elements are missing. Red painted 'set squares', picked out in black, are set into the upper corners. The back of the alcove is panelled.

The alcove at the back of the panelling is enclosed from the room by a six panelled door swung on 18th-century strap hinges with the upper hinge overlying one of the painted flower designs on the door jamb.

The connection between the decorative elements of this room and Freemasonry have been a cause of speculation for some time and are worthy of investigation; however this aspect of the room will not be examined in this report. While it is known that the Grand Lodge was not established until 1717, there is documentary evidence for lodges in the 17th century, including in Scotland (Corcoran 2010). While several of the painted panels are confirmed as containing crests of prominent local families, others, such as the scallop and staff, boar's head, and bunched arrows, appear to be more symbolic in nature and may suggest Masonic connections. One example, on the west wall, close to the bay window, appears to show a mariner's quadrant with the numbers 0 - 90 in increments of ten at the edge of a curve. Several of the symbols, such as a red column with lion, and a dirk may suggest Scottish links, and the existence of a similar room at Culross Palace, Fife, may bolster such an argument. The term 'Winter Parlour' was used to refer to a room which provided a private dining space at the opposite end of the hall, often near the kitchen which would be the warmer part of the house during winter (Logan 2008, 14). It has been speculated that the room may have served a dual function of accommodating early Lodges which initially did not have a fixed location and were moved around Public Houses or the homes of local dignitaries such as solicitors and magistrates (Corcoran 2010). The earliest Lodge in the county was the George and Dragon Lodge, established in 1730. As has been noted however, the panelling may not originate in the Winter Parlour, possibly rather from either the Dining or Tapestry Rooms, therefore any masonic symbolism on the panelling, unless added after the panels were moved, does not necessarily relate to this room.

A number of tapered candle burns were noted in the Winter Parlour with a number being focused around the buffet. These are generally fairly shallow and appear to have been made after the panelling was painted as they overlie the painted decoration. A burn mark, 30mm x 9mm, is located on the upper left corner of the top level of the buffet and another, 65mm x 9mm at the lower edge of the left 'jamb'. A single burn is located on the panel stile to the right of the upper buffet and overlies a painted flower. A burn 36mm x 10mm overlies the scroll and compass design in the upper left corner of the lower buffet (Fig 140). A pair of burns, 60mm x 19mm and 70mm x 7mm, are located on the jamb to the left of the buffet. Other instances can be seen on the cupboard jambs and as previously noted an upside down burn is located on the skirting of the bay window. The significance and interpretation of such marks is addressed in greater detail in Section 9.4.



Scale 1:20, details at 1:5

Winter Parlour panelling Fig 131

Scale 1:50 (A4)

Plan of the Winter Parlour, showing the arrangement of timberwork around the alcove and Lobby Fig 132

General view of the Winter Parlour, looking north-west Fig 133

The east wall, showing the fireplace and buffet, and doors to Lobby and alcove Fig 134

The west wall, with former sash windows Fig 135

Details of painted shields and moralising text Fig 136

Detail of painted decoration; note the misalignment of motifs on the lower rail Fig 137

The fireplace; note reduced jambs and brick arch at the back of the flue Fig 138

The upper buffet Fig 139

Detail of compass design on lower buffet; note taper burn over the design Fig 140

View within the alcove, looking over the buffet Fig 141

View below the buffet, looking towards the Lobby Fig 142

Spice cupboard in the alcove; note half butterfly hinges of the right jamb Fig 143

Shaped door head over alcove entrance Fig 144

View of the alcove ceiling; note V groove on central beam Fig 145

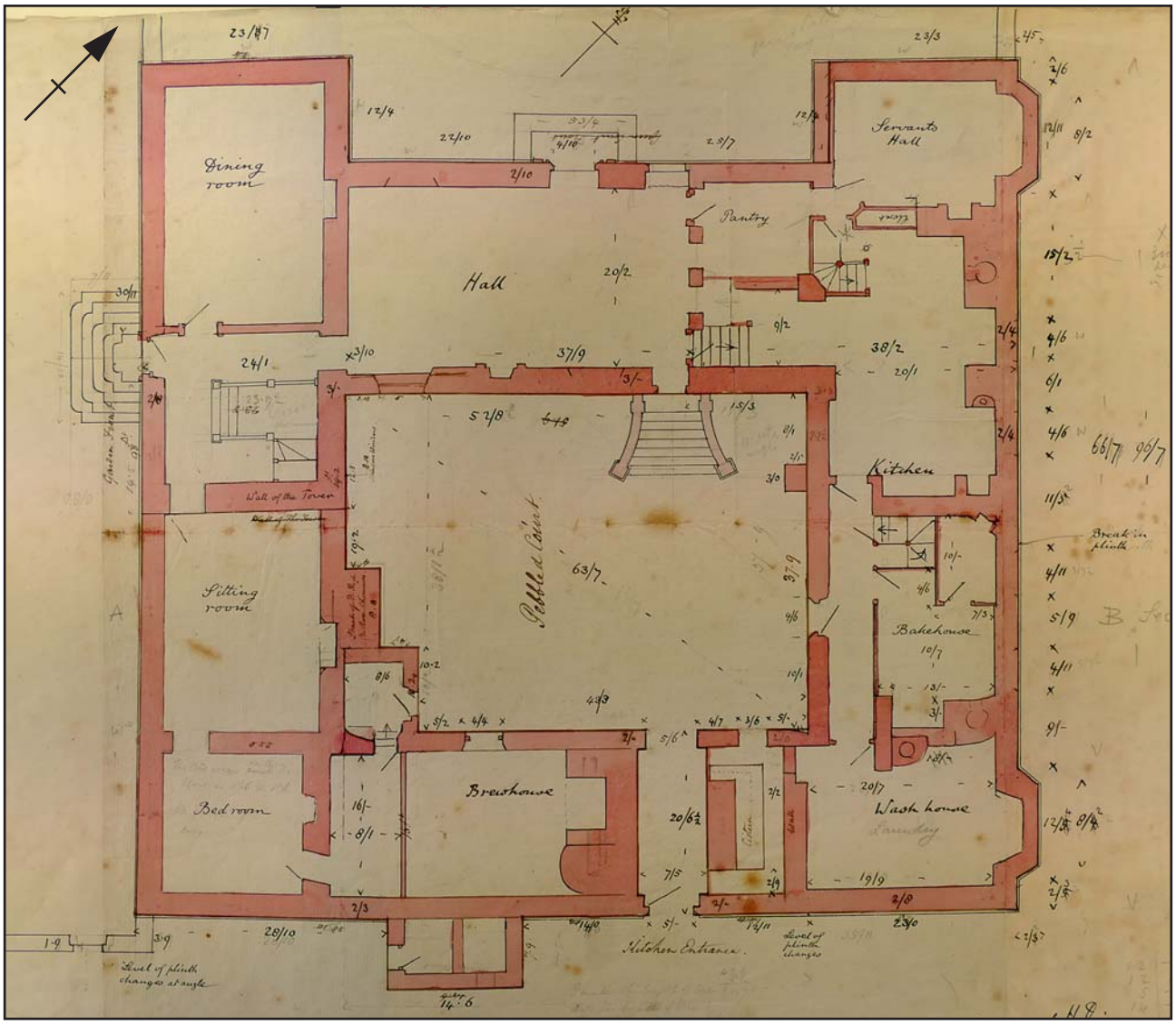
View into the void over the lobby Fig 146

Part of the timber-framing of the Cook's Room, forming the timber-frame bay
Fig 147

The underside of the mezzanine stair, viewed from within the void over the buffet
Fig 148

The floorboards over the lobby, viewed from the void over the lobby Fig 149

The underside of the Lobby ceiling Fig 150



Plan of the house by Rev Henry Dryden, 1836 and Sir Henry Dryden, 1863 Fig 151

Scale 1:125 (A3)

Ground floor plan Fig 152

9 FIRST FLOOR ROOM DESCRIPTIONS (Fig 184)

9.1. Spenser's Room

This room occupies the east end of the first floor of the south range and measures 5.3m x 5m with a uniform floor to ceiling height of 3.9m. It is accessed from the south-west through the Drawing Room and has two sash windows to the south. A former doorway was located in the north-west corner of the room. The external face of the gable wall provides evidence for a former oriel window to the east though it was not possible to see internal evidence for this window during this survey.

Of particular importance to understanding the development of the south range is the stud wall that separates this room from the Drawing Room and which retains an *en grisaille* (monochrome grey with black and white detail and highlights) painted decorative scheme (Figs 153-155).

The oak frame with tenoned-in, mid-height rail beams is made of carefully mortice and tenon jointed oak beams and posts with a curved or lightly canted oak tie beam at the upper edge and a curious masonry gable set above it within the roof space though the lower parts of the stonework can be seen in the upper corners of the exposed wall (Fig 163). The tie beam has a chamfered edge which is step and hollow moulded. Clearly as originally framed up, the partition wall had a doorway with door lintel tenoned in towards the north side which was later shifted to the southern edge. The function of three east to west aligned mortices set in the heads of three of the four studs is not clear. On technological grounds the wall would fit a broad 16th to 17th-century date range. The bottom of the studs are tenoned and pegged into rails and these in turn overlie a substantial oak tie beam that fully spans the wall and was truncated with the insertion of the door to provide an *enfilade* row of doors along the south range. The rails were hewn and sawn and retain areas of bark on the undersides. The exposed side face of the tie beam shows numerous broad axe marks from the hewing process. The bottom of the beam has been shaped to form a shallow ledge. Central to the side face of the tie beam is a double mortice to house the end of a former bridging beam (Fig 158). It is clear that the floor level in this room and in the Drawing Room was once higher and truncated floorboards survive within the door frame and are nailed to the tie beam (Fig 159). It should be noted that the current floorboards of the Drawing Room are continued through the doorway and into Spenser's Room thus confirming that they share a common and contemporary flooring scheme.

The painted scheme was previously hidden underneath 18th-century panelling but was revealed during restoration works and subjected to conservation and stabilisation and left on display. There are two narrative panels which have interpreted as depicting the biblical story of Jeroboam from chapter 13 of the first Book of Kings.

> On the left, King Jeroboam is making a sacrifice at the altar of Bethel, when he is denounced by 'the man of God who came out of Judah'…On the right, the man of God lies dead, having been tricked into accepting hospitality against divine instruction. In the background the host rides out to recover the body, with 'the ass and the lion standing by the carcass' (NT 1998, 16).

The scenes are beautifully and intricately rendered with obvious care to detail and close examination reveals a number of small elements such as ducks on the river and decorative flourishes on background buildings, including a small duck painted on a sign hanging over a building's doorway. The fragmentary remains of a windmill can be seen painted over the left stud and it is clear that the paintings were not constrained to the plaster panels but also carried on over the timberwork though these were used as framing devices between the individual narrative panels. A smaller panel to the upper right of the wall over a former doorway is also rendered in *en grisaille* and forms a decorative scrollwork cartouche but any central design has been lost. The panel at the

lower part of the wall has a red and yellow painted grid with black and grey linear patterns in each grid. The 'dado' rail forming the top of this panel has a number of scratched graffiti designs including a child-like human figure adjacent to a ladder, a large kite-like design and a large graffito reminiscent of the crow foot designs sometimes utilised as carpenter's assembly marks (Figs 156, 157). Other linear scratched graffiti are also present. The lower part of the left wall stud is also painted red. The plasterwork contained within the blocked door is largely plain however small scratched and painted graffiti are present including a small but delicately rendered drawing of an 18th-century clergyman and a lady, a cruder depiction of a kneeling lady and the head of another character, faint depictions of feathers or leafs and an architectural design resembling an elaborately decorated finial or item of furniture such a mirror or clock.

It was possible to slightly pull back the large tapestry which fully covers the east wall in order to confirm that the red and yellow pattern painted scheme of the west wall is repeated on the east wall, though surviving in a much more fragmentary state. During conservation works it was revealed that a long timber lintel is embedded towards the top of the east wall and that the arms of Erasmus Dryden are painted on this beam, and this has been taken to confirm that the painted decorative scheme of the room was commissioned by him. This beam is just visible on a photograph of the room taken during the works (CANT28GN).

The Rococo style ceiling is rendered in papier maché and is attributed to John Dryden 7th Bt, son of Edward Dryden, who inherited the house in 1717. The ceiling is delicately worked and is framed by a coved and roll moulded cornice, and comprises four heads representing the four seasons surrounding the central motif (Fig 162). An elaborate late 18th century Rococo style ceiling can also be found in one of the Sitting Rooms at Biggin Hall, Benefield. The creation of this ceiling was accompanied by a heightening of the room and new joists were added at a higher level, carried between collars at the north and south sides of the roof.

The north wall is panelled and this scheme formerly also covered the west and eastern walls. The current pale cream colour scheme was added following conservation works and prior to this the panelling was a dark brown colour. The panelling is in the large-panel style with short dado rails separating the upper and lower fields, and is likely of a mid-18th century date, matching the mid 18th-century decorative ceiling. Similar panelling is also found in the Tapestry Room enclosing the fireplace. In the north-east corner of the room is an early to mid 18th-century two-panelled door with a pair of small square panels between the main panels. This door type and its variants were popular in superior rooms from around 1630-1730 (Hall 2011, 40). The doorway formerly led into the adjacent Dressing Room (now the house office) but this access was blocked by the National Trust during the 1980s.

Centrally to the north wall is an early 18th-century marble fireplace with straight clean jambs with lightly carved geometric fields, and with a plain lintel with a light arch to the underside. A marble hearth is set before the fire opening. The similar fireplace in the Painted Parlour has been attributed to the Smiths of Warwick (Bailey *et al* 2013, 156). The fireplace is set into a moulded architrave and has an elaborately decorated frieze below the overmantle shelf.

Above the fireplace is a large square panel with moulded frame which until recently contained a picture, and this panel has latterly been hinged to allow the underlying earlier decorative scheme to be viewed. In addition, a photograph held at the house office shows the surrounding area with panelling removed (Fig 161). The north wall is primarily constructed of coursed rubble which was formerly plastered. The fireplace is flanked by two studs with lath and plasters, embedded in the stonework to support the panelling and these rise from just above floor level to the ceiling.

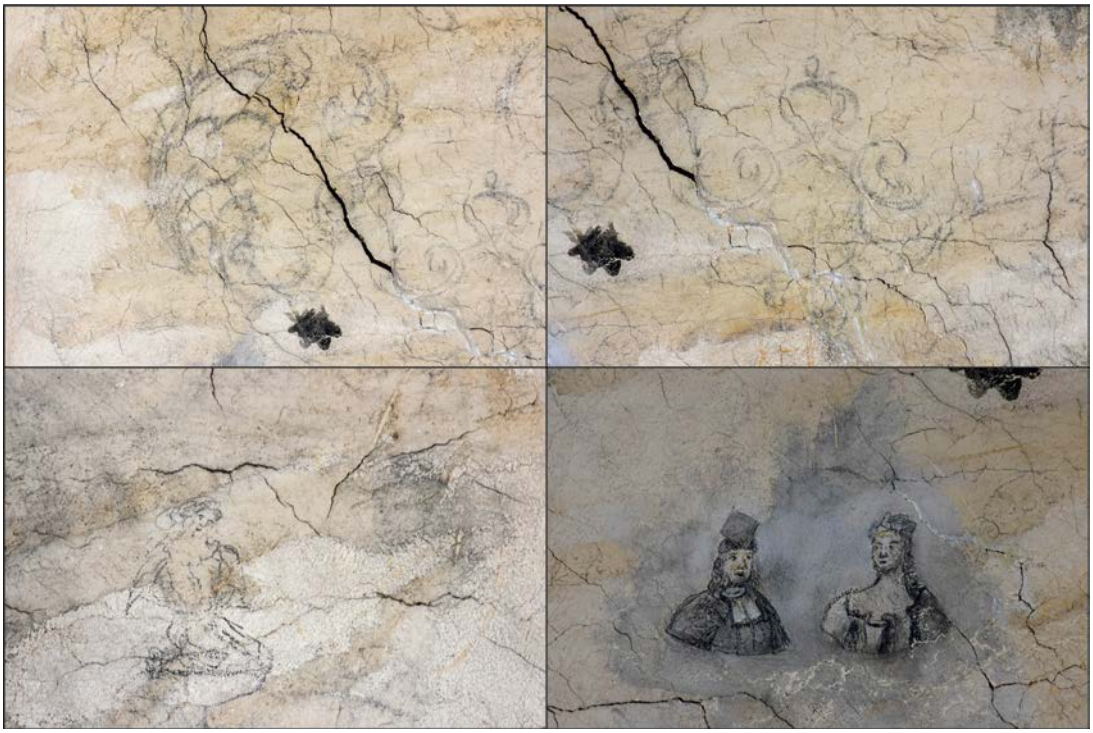
Above the fireplace are several courses of brickwork including one course of angled brickwork. Above this are two header courses and a shiner course and the brickwork is finished with a timber rail that stops at the flanking studs though it is unclear how the rail interacts with them. It seems likely that arrangement indicates a reduction of an earlier large fire opening. A pair of moulded plaster panels framing circular blue-painted cartouches is set into the masonry above the timber rail (Fig 160). Sadly the central designs of both panels have been lost. An array of laths and thin studs is visible in the upper left and are partly overlain by the left hand decorative panel. One of these small studs is set at an angle that appears to reflect an angled join in the masonry likely relating to the fireplace flue. The end of a timber beam embedded in the stonework is located in the upper right corner, adjacent to the right hand stud.

The large-panel scheme is continued on the south wall incorporating the two sash windows into the design. The initial assessment of these windows prior to conservation and restoration works suggested that the extent of disrepair would require the building of new sashes to replace the originals (Bucknall and Melville 1980, 57). This is likely to have been undertaken as both windows have small horns, an anachronistic feature for early 18th-century windows. The windows have folding shutters swung on H-hinges with decorative ends and when closed can be secured by horizontal shutter bars.

The west wall of Spenser's Room Fig 153

The upper-left corner; note stonework over tie beam and the relative position of cornice Fig 154

Defunct mortices with truncated tenons in situ Fig 155



Detail of small graffiti on the west wall Fig 156

Detail of child's graffiti Fig 157

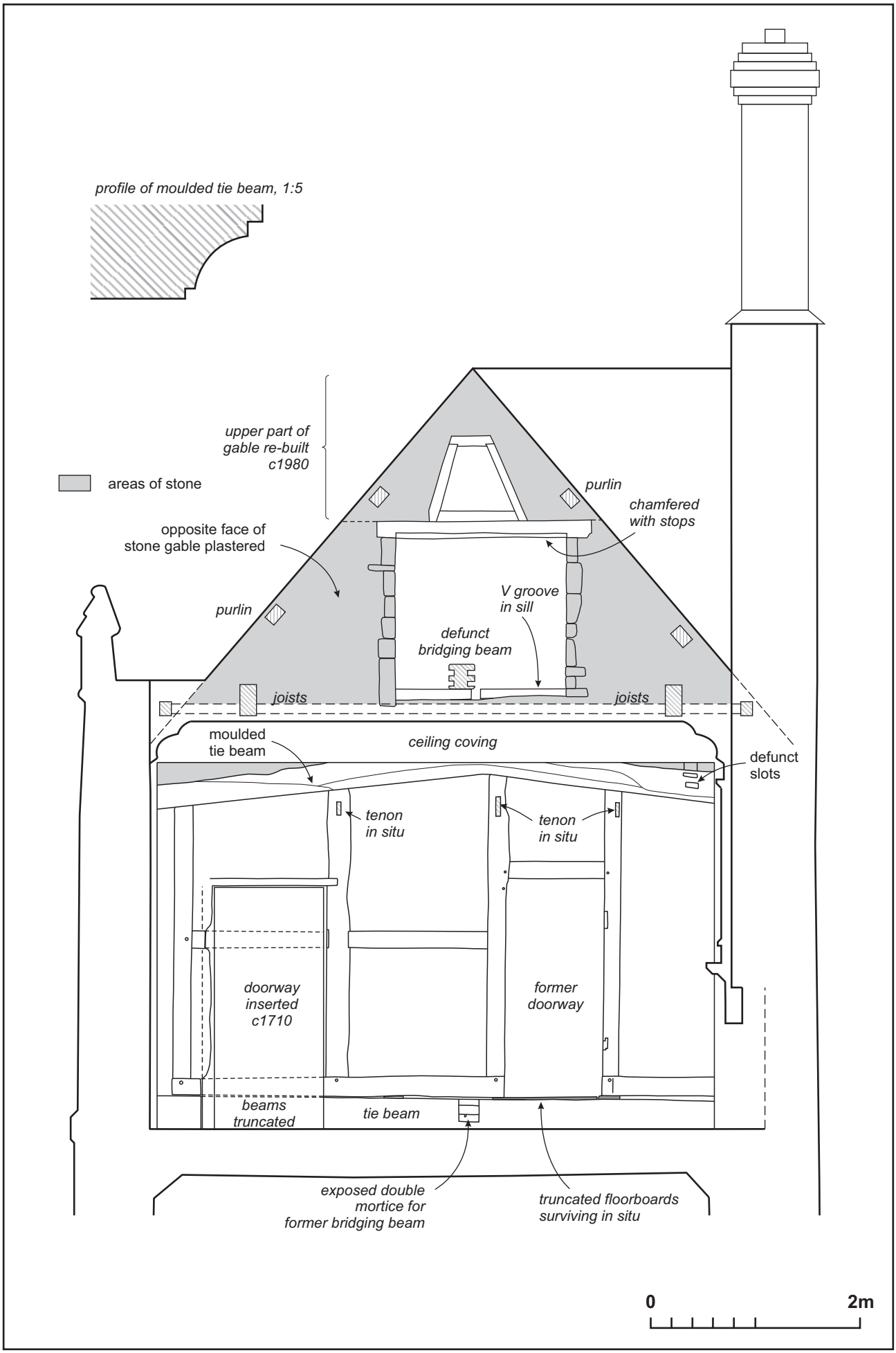
Defunct double tenon joint on lower beam Fig 158

Truncated floor boards at the base of the former door Fig 159

Brickwork and plaster panels behind the panelling of the north wall Fig 160

View of the north wall during conservation, with panelling removed Fig 161

The papier maché ceiling Fig 162



Scale 1:50 (A4) The Spenser's Room partition and stone gable Fig 163

9.2. Drawing Room

The Drawing Room measures 8.4m in length and 5.7m in width and is 2.9m to the cornice and approximately 5.3m to the crown of the ceiling (Fig 164).

The Jacobean style quadripartite plasterwork ceiling was created in the 1630s by John Dryden 2nd Bt following his third marriage and features a central drop pendant that may have formerly carried a chandelier (Fig 166). The ceiling is decorated with strapwork and intertwined with thistles and pomegranates. On the north side of the ceiling are the coat of arms of Sir John and his wife.

Prior to 1630 the Drawing Room or Great Chamber had a domed barrel vault whose frame was incorporated into the later ceiling (Figs 277-279). The current ceiling carcass is comprised of curving ribs springing from horizontal beams at the room's four cornice lengths, and joining at the longitudinal spine beam which formerly served the earlier ceiling. This beam has a hollow moulded underside edge which would formerly have been exposed to the room; the timber retains traces of white paint. The sides of the beam show defunct mortice slots for the ribs of the earlier ceiling and a number of these slots were utilised to carry the ribs of the later ceiling. As well as the curving rafters there are three longitudinal beams below the rafters and these are joined by battens to which the plasterwork is attached. The roof space is bounded to the west by the eastern wall of the tower, and to the east by the stone gable carried over the Spenser's Room timber partition. It was noted that the west face of the stone gable is plastered and painted.

It has been suggested that John Dryden 2nd Bt had the north wall thickened in order to support the ceiling, however no evidence for such work has been put forward (NT 1998). When viewed in plan the north wall continues the line and thickness of the north walls of the Tower and Tapestry Room. It is evident that the curving rafters of the ceiling are carried on cornices which on the south wall overhang the wall face and it seems unlikely that only one wall would be thickened if such work was required at all.

The ceiling is tightly fitted to the gable roof which is composed of common rafters springing from the wall plates. The rafter pairs overlap at the apex and are secured by pegged through tenons; no ridge piece is used in this roof. The vaulted ceiling prevents the rafters from being tied and as a result there is little to prevent outward spreading of the roof at the wall plates. By the 1980s the timbers were in extremely poor condition due to damp and beetle infestation and the ceiling had become warped and cracked due to structural deficiencies of the south wall. It has been noted that previous attempts were made to secure the ceiling by means of iron hangers but the repair was unsuccessful or insufficient to mitigate against continued disrepair (Bucknall and Melville 1980, 64)

The conservation works which were required to stabilise the Drawing Room ceiling are described as follows:

> The distorted roof over the Great Chamber had to be strengthened by a lattice steel framework. The steelwork and lattice work was designed by the structural engineers in conjunction with ourselves. It then necessitated us forming timber templates for the lattice timber being made on site and then sent to the manufacturer thereby enabling the steelwork, when it came to site, to be of exact dimensions.
>
> We then had the painstaking task of taking the steelwork, piece by piece, through a gable end window and forming a trackway over the existing roof to get this lattice work into position, again taking care not to put any weight on the Great Chamber ceiling. When all was in place, it also enabled the framework to be used to support the Great Chamber ceiling with additional timber supports.

> Another problem with the domed ceiling to the Great Chamber was the failing of the key to the decorative plaster. This was overcome by strengthening using the traditional method of overlaying with casting plaster and hessian fixed to the ceiling timbers with heavy gauge malleable copper wire (Building 1984).

It has been suggested that there was formerly a projecting bay spanning the width of the three windows to the Drawing Room and Book Room. It was not possible to see any physical evidence for such a feature during this survey. An oblique view of the south wall taken with the plasterwork removed shows what appear to timber blocks at the top of the walls between the sash window and these may have formed a continuous beam which was truncated to accommodate the sash windows. As in the Book Room, this survey has seen no evidence to prove or disprove the presence of a former southern bay. It has been noted that fragments of decorative plasterwork were recovered during conservation works and these have been attributed to the former ceiling of the bay, though this has not been confirmed and they could also be remnants of the former barrel vaulted ceiling (NT 1998, 23). These pieces are currently on display in the former Brewhouse.

The north wall of the Drawing Room is dominated by a large two-storey chimney piece and fireplace which spans from the floor to the cornice (Fig 165). The fire opening has a wide four-centred arch with recessed spandrels and chamfered cheeks. The underside of the arch is supported by a shaped iron bar and a pair of cast iron columns were inserted by Henry Dryden the Antiquary to strengthen the structure. Traces of decorative black paintwork survive on the arch. The splays are covered with 19th century delft tiles and the fireback is comprised of smoke blackened bricks. The fireplace formerly contained an Adams-style grate. The current decorative iron fireback comprises a central vase and flowers motif; a very similar cast iron back, also with vase and flower design can be found at Penshurst Place, Kent (Shuffrey 1912). It is flanked by a pair of columns with toroidal bases seated on block plinths and rising to decorative Ionic capitals. These carry an overmantle decorated with mythical beasts and interlaced branches and leaves. At the underside of the overmantle centre is a stone 'green man' face. The overmantle steps out at the centre and ends to carry pairs of Corinthian style columns, darkly coloured with painted marbling. Across the top of the chimney piece is a decorative frieze which includes winged heads, cartouches, branches and flowers. In 1710 Edward Dryden added two painted wooden panels displaying the Dryden arms and the motto ‘Antient as the Druids’. Fragments of an earlier decorative scheme survive behind these panels but were not visible during this survey. Although the chimney piece and ceiling are not contemporary features they share common design elements such as Etruscan masks and organic motifs which are also present on the fragments of ceiling plaster recovered from the cornice space during the restoration works.

In comparison to mainland Europe, the English Renaissance was a relatively late movement and its introduction to the country was largely enabled by the development of the printing press which allowed Classical forms and ideas to percolate to the English gentry, albeit second-hand, through the works of European architects and artists such as Serlio, Shute and Vrederman de Vries, as well as rediscovered ancient architects such as Vitruvius. With exceptions such as Old Somerset House, English craftsmen and their patrons were not generally interested in implementing the rules of Classical architecture but rather picked and copied specific forms and decorative elements to create a fashionable pastiche without an underlying restraint or discipline. In Northamptonshire, Renaissance influence was comparatively late and "as an architectural fashion was not received in this part of the Midlands until the mid-fifties" [1550's] (Steane, 1974, 200). At Kirby Hall, the ornamentation found on the giant order pilasters flanking the courtyard entrance is taken verbatim from the frontispiece

illustration to Shute's *First and Chief Groundes of Architecture*, and the capitals are adaptations of a woodcut by Serlio (Summerson 1993). An early example of English Renaissance chimney design is the large two-storey chimney piece in the Great Chamber at Losely, Surrey, which has pairs of Corinthian columns at the lower level with wreaths over the basal plinths, and pairs of caryatids spanning between the overmantle and cornice (Shuffrey 1912). The space over the fireplace was filled with the More family heraldic bearings. The elaborate design of this early work as well as others such as at South Wraxall Manor, Wiltshire which also has a decorative plaster ceiling, contrast with the comparatively simpler work at Canons Ashby and shows the variable treatment applied to such elements. At Apethorpe Palace the Long Gallery fireplace is flanked by Ionic columns carrying an entablature and broken pediment with a central statue niche flanked by columns (BHO 2018). The Long Gallery also has a plaster strapwork ceiling with crosses and octagons. The decorative motifs incorporated into the Canons Ashby Drawing Room ceiling and chimneypiece appear to be sourced from imported publications and illustrations of the Renaissance period, however given the general decline in the trend for such work by the early 17th century, the use of this ornamentation at Canons Ashby was somewhat out of fashion by this time.

A useful comparison may be drawn between the Drawing Room at Canons Ashby and the Brown Parlour and Great Parlour at Quenby Hall, Leicestershire (1615-20), which were provided with two-storey chimney pieces reflecting the status of their associated rooms in the detailing and elaboration of their decorative treatment. The Brown Parlour chimney piece comprises a Tudor-arch fireplace flanked by flat pilasters with carved strapwork style decoration with the upper level comprising three pilasters flanking statue niches. The room's cornice and frieze are continued over the chimney piece. The chimney piece to the Great Parlour is most similar to that at Canons Ashby and has pairs of shaped pilasters with scrolled brackets supporting the overmantle, with pairs of decorative columns rising from carved plinths to elaborate capitals. Both the Brown Parlour and Great Parlour have plaster strapwork ceilings with various motifs contained in the pattern.

The use of strapwork in English buildings was acquired from Antwerp in the 16th century, primarily due to the influence of publishers such as Hieronymus Cock (Summerson 1953). The sense of antiquity and the light complex design appealed to the English taste and was rapidly taken up by builders. Fine examples of 16th and 17th-century strapwork ceilings can be found at Knole House (c1605), Haddon Hall (1567-84) Crewe Hall (1636) and Sizergh Castle (1558-75).

In the north-east corner of the room is a doorway which opens to the external stair turret and provides access to the upper floor of the east range. The door is of an eight-panel design with moulded panels and set within a bolection moulded architrave rising from block plinths. It is swung on two 18th-century L-hinges with expanded ends and has a brass and iron rim lock. The door is both wider and taller than the doorframe beyond and was inserted to provide a uniform scheme of fenestration to the room. In order to allow for the door to function with the narrower earlier frame, the earlier jamb was cut back to allow for the door knob and escutcheon to be accessible from outside the room. The frame jambs are chamfered towards the room and have ogee stops *c*0.5m from the floor. Small deliberate cutaways on the outer edges of the jambs may relate to fittings for the former door. Two iron hooks are embedded in the upper corners of the frame.

The three sash windows rise from short window seats to cornice level and have panelled skirting and shutter boxes, as well as panelled lintels. The shutters are swung on H-hinges with expanded ends and the right hand shutter of each window folds in on itself. Each can be secured by a diagonal shutter bar.

View of the Drawing Room, looking east Fig 164

The Drawing Room chimney piece Fig 165

The Drawing Room ceiling Fig 166

9.3. Tapestry Room

The Tapestry Room occupies the western end of the first floor of the south range, formerly the upper storey of John Dryden's Tower House prior to its northward expansion and joining to Wylkyns Farm. It is a rectangular room measuring 8.1m x 5.5m and has a floor to ceiling height of 2.9m. The room is accessed only from the tower stair landing but formerly also had a door into the Long Gallery. There are three sash windows overlooking the south gardens, and stone mullion windows to the west and north are now covered behind tapestries. Centrally to the north wall is a fireplace with marble surround.

The stone windows to the west and north date to the original construction of the Tower House and provide an indication as to the decorative scheme formerly applied to this room. The west window comprises eight arch-headed lights divided by cavetto mullions with an additional decorative spine to the central mullion and this is reminiscent of the style of window moulding applied to several late medieval church windows in Northamptonshire. The stonework was painted a dark red colour. The splayed reveals are covered by oak shutters with moulded fields picked out in gold paint and with gold and green decorative arabesques in the centre of each field. The interior of the north window could not be viewed during this survey, however a photograph of the room prior to restoration work shows that the north window does not have shutters remaining in situ (CANT72BLK).

The door is an 18th-century eight-panel design recessed within a panelled doorway set within a moulded architrave rising from square blocks. The interior architrave is bolection moulded while the outer is flat with light moulding at the edges. The door is swung on two large 18th-century L-hinges with decorative ends. The external fields are raised with elaborate edge moulding while the inner faces are plain with only a light beading at the arrises. The door has a simple brass and iron rim lock with brass knobs and escutcheon. Adjacent to the door, on the tower side of the wall, is a chamfered oak post (likely octagonal) which rises to the ceiling.

An ancillary doorway in the north-east corner of the room opens into a defunct space that lies within the wall and is partially bounded by the south wall of the adjacent Nursery. This was formerly a doorway through to the Long Gallery and is positioned centrally to the west range, being intruded upon by the later inserted longitudinal dividing wall. The door's sill is raised one step above the floor level and it is uncertain if the floor level has altered or if the doorway was created with a step between the levels. Given that the Tower and adjoining western block were initially built as a freestanding structure that was later expanded by the construction of the Hall range, it is likely that a blocked window is present on the north wall of the room and similarly also at ground level. It is possible therefore that the now defunct door to the Long Gallery was created within such a window.

The south wall is panelled and this also wraps around the adjacent door and is interrupted by the three sash windows. A close examination of the panelling reveals that it is not a uniform scheme but rather is an amalgamation of different designs cut to fit the space. At the west and east sides of the room the panelling is of the small-square design comprising tenon and pegged rails and stiles with elaborate edge moulding and chamfered dust ledges. The top rail is partly covered by the later cornice and the lowest rail is an insertion to finish the panelling at skirting level. Between the first and second windows the panelling is much less decorative with simple beading to the stiles, chamfered dust ledges, and occasional runout moulding. In order to merge this part of the panelling with those at ceiling level a section of two panels were set on edge between a rough frame to fill the gap. Between the second and third windows another panelling style is represented, here comprising deeper and more elaborate moulding to the stiles separated by central channels.

The sash windows have panelled skirting and the reveals are also covered by elaborately moulded fielded panels. The windows contain pairs of shutters whose plain design contrasts with the panelling of the reveals, and these can be secured by short pivoting bars.

The level of the Tapestry Room floor in relation to those in the rest of the south range did not comfortably allow for the creation of the uniform and symmetrical façade envisaged by Edward Dryden. In order to maintain a continuous run of windows the bottom of the sash windows in the Tapestry Room were required to be at floor level and this incongruity was hidden behind the window seats and only the upper two levels of glazing of the lower sashes are visible in the room.

No panelling is present around the north, east and west walls, except for around the fireplace, and the walls were formerly wallpapered (CANT72BLK).

The marble fireplace is early 18th century in date and comprises straight, flat surfaced jambs with light geometric embellishment, supporting a plain straight lintel with lightly curved underside. An identical fireplace is located in Spenser's Room and similar ones are located in the Dining Room and Painted Parlour. Above is a thin shelf supported by decorative brackets. A simple stone hearth is set before the fireplace and within is a decorative cast iron fireback. The fireplace contrasts with the dark stained oak panelling that occupies the centre of the north wall. This was formerly painted white and was restored to a darker scheme as part of the 1980s restoration works. The panelling here, in comparison to the small-square panelling of the south wall, is in the large-panel style which is more typical of the 18th century.

The floor is comprised of 23 rows of east-west aligned oak boards, with an average board width of 200-300mm.

Around the edge of the ceiling is an ovolo moulded cornice whose pale colour is at odds with the dark panelling and tapestries. The fragmentary remains of a former geometric pattern cornice can be seen above the fireplace. The ceiling is plastered and plainly painted and is divided by two projecting bridging beams which underlie the principal rafter trusses in the Garret kitchen space above. The beams are boxed heart oak with flattened underside surfaces and ogee and step moulded chamfers to the ceiling. The chamfer mouldings do not lead to stops but appear to simply terminate at the walls though this is obscured by the cornice. It is likely that the beams were formerly stained a darker colour than the present scheme.

9.4. The Long Gallery

The Long Gallery is a wide corridor spanning the full width of the west range and serves to connect the first floor levels of the south and north ranges. The room is *c*16.4m in length and 3m wide, with a variable floor to ceiling height averaging at 2.3m. There are four east-facing windows set at irregular intervals and there is external evidence for a fifth window which was blocked to allow for the insertion of a chimney flue to the Hall fireplace. A cupboard was formerly located in the south-west corner of the Long Gallery and can be seen on the 1980s architects' plans but was removed during restoration works.

To the west the Long Gallery is bounded by a timber-framed wall. This was cheaply built using recycled timbers and traces of plaster indicate that the timberwork was not originally intended to have been visible though evidence suggests that it was un-plastered for some length of time. The recycling of oak is common from the later 17th century when its increased cost and lessened availability encouraged the re-use of existing timbers. The wall frame comprises beams at floor and ceiling into which are tenoned and pegged the studs and these are joined by a series of mid-height tenon and pegged rails. The lower beam is largely hidden by the floor boards but rises into view at the north side of the room. A simple skirting scheme spans the length of the wall but is interrupted at most of the stud positions. A freestanding beam set in front of the wall plane towards the south end of the room has a bolted iron strap at the top which secures and supports the overlying roof tie beam. At its base it is also strapped to an underlying beam.

The timbers display a number of deliberate tapered candle burns and these are generally at mid-height and concentrated on the studs, though two were also located on the mid-height rails. There were eight individual burns, a group of two on the east side of the northern door frame and an overlapping cluster of at least five burns on the west side of the same door frame (Fig 169). The burns are variable in size, ranging from 45mm to 140mm in length and 15mm to 55mm in width. The majority of the burns are relatively shallow. It has been recorded that such markings have been found in buildings dating back to the 13th century and in some houses such as at Gainsborough Old Hall and Sissinghurst have been found in their hundreds (Champion 2017). Experiments at recreating these marks have determined that it requires a flame to be held at 45 degrees to the wall for a period of around fifteen minutes, and for deeper marks requires the char to be scraped from the mark and the flame to be reapplied. The reasoning behind the profusion of such marks in both domestic residences and churches is not fully understood however they are likely apotropaic marks to inoculate the house against fire, in much the same way that compass patterns may be engraved around doors, windows and fireplaces to capture spirits and evil. At Knole House a number of such burns were discovered on the late medieval roof structure and at Canons Ashby a single example was found on one of the roof trusses in the north-west corner of the house. It has also been suggested that taper burns may be associated with Candlemas, an important religious celebration which took place in early February and marked the end of the winter season (Champion 2017). Candles played an important role in this festival and blessed candles could be taken away by congregants and perhaps marking ones home with these candles was seen as passing their holiness into the fabric of the house; given the Puritan faith of the Drydens however, a connection with Candlemas may be unlikely. All of the taper burns on this wall were located the correct way up, thus indicating that they are *in situ* rather than pre-existing on re-used timbers. It is unclear over what period of time such markings were produced.

The timber partition wall is pierced by four doorways, three leading to the rooms at the west side of the west range and the northernmost framing a short narrow passageway to the north-west stair. The southern door is an early to mid 18th-century style two-

panelled door with the top awkwardly cut to accommodate the angled door lintel. The bottom of the door likewise forms an angled gap to the floor. Although the floor and ceiling at the south side of the Long Gallery are sloped upwards, it is unclear why this was also reflected in the top of the doorway which could have remained flat. Midway between the first and second door the mid-height tail rises to a possible lintel though it was not possible to clearly see this feature as a large cabinet has been placed against it. A doorway in this position would not be able to function with the present room arrangement as it is in line with partition wall between the Nursery and Alice's Room. The door to Alice's Room is a six-panel door with panels planed on one side and trimmed at the other. The frame is plain towards the Long Gallery but the inner side has beading to the arrises. The door is swung on 17th-century style cockshead hinges and secured by a rim lock bolt. The third door accesses the publicly inaccessible WC and changing room and is an 18th-century two-panel door of the same design as to the Nursery. This door is swung on 18th-century H-hinges with decorative ends and is secured by a rim lock. A modern door closer has also been installed. The insertion of the three doorways required the truncation of the mid-height rails, thus indicating that the present arrangement of three rooms post-dates the wall.

The northern doorframe comprises a lintel or door head, lightly arched or canted, and chamfered at the underside edges and cut an angle into the adjacent posts or studs (Fig 167). Unusually there are two sets of pegs at each end, the two on the lintel being larger than those on the posts which hold the active joint (Fig 168). It is possible that the two larger pegs held a pegged-on timber element such as a moulded hood which has been removed, or that the door head utilises floating tenons. Scribed set out lines are also visible on door head and jambs.

The wall framing of the north wall is not visible and it is unclear if the longitudinal wall is tied into the north wall or abuts it. In the north-east corner of the Long Gallery is a doorway to the adjacent Sitting Room and this door also has a timber lintel held between the posts that frame the doorway. The lintel has a lightly arched underside edge and a double peg arrangement at its eastern side with one peg on the lintel and the adjacent peg in the post. On the west side of the lintel two side-by-side pegs are both in the post though it is unclear if the outer peg serves the active joint. The door itself is a plank and ledge door with an internal wooden latch and rim-lock. The eastern door post has a slight rounded cut-away to allow better access to the keyhole. The door is swung on 17th or 18th-century tapered strap hinges with expanded ends.

The floor boards are a mixture of oak and elm, the latter displaying a variability of wear and patina which reflects several phases of repair including 1980s repairs when elm was readily available from the processing of trees cut to control Dutch Elm disease. The earlier oak boards are early in date, likely 16th century while the earliest elm repairs likely date to the 17th and 18th centuries.

It has been suggested that three lengths of floor boards running perpendicular to the main flooring and stopping short of the east wall are evidence for former room partitions at the east side of the Long Gallery. It was possible to determine that two of these are simply thin boards with no underlying beam that could have supported a partition wall. The third, closest to the south end of the Long Gallery was a more substantial piece and at its eastern end has a mortice slot with truncated tenon *in situ*, as well as a shallow circular indentation with stave groove. However no other markings are visible on the remainder of the timber and due to widespread recycling of materials in the house it cannot be said be certainty if this timber is *in situ*.

Some evidence for the rearrangement of partition walls is evident on the floor at the north end of the Long Gallery where an obvious linear differentiation of patina and wear of the elm boards, as well closely set nail holes, suggest the position of a former

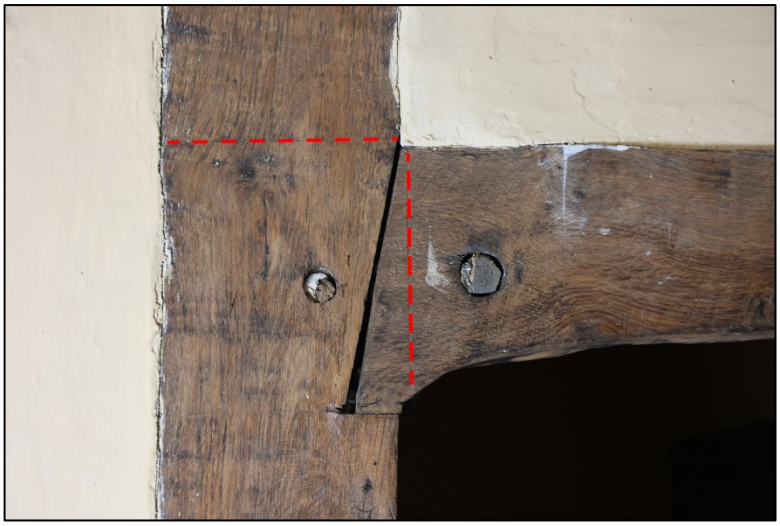
partition (Fig 170). This partition would narrow the east to west passage and does not work with the current wider doorway.

As previously noted, a blocked doorway located centrally to the south wall of the Long Gallery formerly allowed access into the Tapestry Room. The longitudinal partition wall is set centrally to this former doorway and the use of this doorway would require the removal or partial reduction of the wall.

It is noted that fragments of a wall painting spanning the full length of the east wall were uncovered during restoration works but these are not visible at present and no images of them are available (NT 1998, 28). A full length wall painting would make rooms on the east side of the Long Gallery unlikely as the partition walls would interrupt the paint scheme.

The doorway between the Long Gallery and Tower may be a later creation following the blocking of the central door and creation of the central partition wall. The door is faced with three oak planks towards the Long Gallery but on the Tower side has applied ovolo moulded fillets forming nine tall panels. Doors with horizontal and vertical fillets are common in the later 16th century, and became less fashionable towards the second half of the 17th century (Hall 2011, 34). The door is swung on 16th or 17th-century tapered strap hinges with expanded ends and has a large rim lock with wooden lock case. The Tower side architrave is elaborately carved, with ogee step and ovolo moulded jambs leading to pumpkin or vase stops over chamfered plinths. The jamb moulding is also continued over the lintel.

Doorway to Long Gallery from north-west stair Fig 167



Detail of the double-pegged door head with scribed lines picked out Fig 168

Group of candle burns on the door jamb Fig 169

Differential weathering on floorboards suggesting former partition arrangement Fig 170

9.5. Nursey

This is a small and sparsely decorated and furnished room which has been restored to reflect a late 19th-century children's nursery. The walls are plain, merely plastered and painted a pale cream / white, likewise the ceiling. The floor comprises dark-stained boards, likely oak, spanning north to south. The principal features are the large window in the west wall and a chimney and fireplace set at an angle at the junction of the west and south walls. The pivot for a servant's bell remains *in situ* at the top of the north wall.

The window is a square-headed three-light ovolo mullion window with diamond pattern glazing. The outer lights are fixed with diamond pattern glazing and internal stanchions. The central light is side hung with an iron frame and has a decorative latch with handle and a spiral tail stay. The window reveal drops to just above the floor to create a window seat and wooden panels are set within the reveal, window seat and skirting as well as over the lintel. The window has pairs of folding shutters swung on H-hinges and held closed by a small hook.

The angle of the chimney is panelled in a style reminiscent to that in Spenser's Room, comprising large panels over small with short, moulded dado rails between. The fireplace is quite small and comprises a black marbled stone surround with flat plain jambs and lintel, lightly moulded on the inside edges. Within the fire opening is a cast iron grate and the hearth is formed of stone flags. The panelling and fireplace suggest an early 18th-century date though given the perseverance of early fashions in Northamptonshire a later date may be possible.

A moulded timber post positioned against the west wall adjacent to the window was inserted to support one of the overlying roof trusses, Truss W6.

9.6. Alice's Room

This room is a little larger than the adjacent nursery and has been restored to resemble Alice Dryden's room as it was in the late 19th century. The wallpaper is a recent addition and is in a small-scale repeating branch and leaf design typical of the late 19th century; prior to this the walls were plain. The ceiling is plain with no cornice at the join of the walls. The floor is bare oak boards aligned north to south. A two-panelled door in the north-east corner of Alice's Room allows access to the adjacent room.

A fireplace is set into the angle between the north and west walls and was served by a small external flue that projected over the roof parapet. The fireplace has a simple wooden surround and a mantle shelf is carried over scrolled brackets. Within is a compact and well-made one-piece cast iron grate incorporating basket and reveals and this is likely 19th century in date. The angled flue is actually a very recent mock-up in plywood and the fireplace has been added in order to complete the restoration of the room. The original flue and fireplace were removed post-1921 since the chimneys are visible on Country Life photographs of that date.

The window reveals extend from the ceiling to ground level, unusually providing no window seat. It is possible that the wall below the window was altered to allow for a full height recess into which a dressing table could be placed. The window is a square-headed three-light ovolo mullion window with fixed outer lights flanking a central side-hung light. The window has a decorative latch with handle of the same design as recorded in the nursery, and a spiral tail stay.

Flanking the window are two timber posts both with moulded surfaces, and these were inserted to brace the overlying roof trusses. It is unlikely that these beams were produced and moulded specifically for this room, rather it is more likely that are recycled timbers. The floor boards at the base of each have been cut to fit the mouldings.

9.7. Staff WC / Changing Room

This room is currently largely disused, serving as a makeshift changing room and WC for staff and volunteers. The walls are plastered and painted and the south-east corner is wainscoted. A walk-in cupboard / closet has been built against the east wall and a bathtub has been installed in the south-west corner of the room. Adjacent is a *Shanks* toilet and sink.

The west-facing window is a square-headed three-light ovolo mullion window with fixed lights flanking a central casement. The window has a decorative latch and spiral tail stay similar to those in the Nursery and Alice's Room. The window reveals, lintel and window seat are panelled and the window can be enclosed by folding shutters.

Historic views of the west range show that this room formerly had a fireplace and this was mostly likely located in the south-west corner where the bath tub currently is.

9.8. Sitting Room

This room (referred to as the Dryden Sitting Room or DSR by house staff and volunteers) has a complex developmental history and appears to have been subdivided and reopened on more than one occasion throughout the building's history. The room is also intruded into by the stair turret which leads to the attic and has a floor at two levels (Figs 171, 174, 176).

The Sitting Room has three access points: from the Long Gallery, from the corridor that spans the north range, and at a lower level from the north-west stair. Another door, now blocked, formerly provided an alternative route into the stair turret. The windows have previously been described in Section 5.1 and descriptions need not be repeated here.

The current open-plan form of the room post-dates the 1980s restoration works prior to which the space was subdivided into several distinct spaces, labelled as rooms F8-F10 on the second floor plan (Bucknall and Melville 1980). It is unclear when this subdivision was put in place and no historic plans of the internal layout, other than at ground floor level, were found during research for this project. During restoration works, as well as removing these former subdivisions, the lower floor level across the western part of the room was raised except for a narrow length adjacent to the stair.

The south wall is part of the timber-framed bay division which at this level comprises tie beams at floor and ceiling with plastered lath and stud infill (presumed) (Fig 194). The ceiling tie beam has a chamfered lower edge and a number of peg holes, some empty and others with pegs *in situ*, located on both the chamfered edge and just above it on the flat face. A single peg is also located at the upper part of the beam, below the ceiling, and appears to be aligned with a vertical support on the roof truss above. The lower pegs likely secure the studs and staves which form the wall.

The wall has a monochrome painted decorative scheme, unfortunately damaged at its western half, depicting the interior of a room, complete with stacked arch-headed windows of the same design as those which light the Tapestry Room (Fig 175). The scene is presented as a stage with curtains at the top of the stage held back by a naked child. The room is depicted in trompe l'oeil or forced perspective showing three walls, all with windows and wainscot panelling. At the centre are male and female figures with the combined coat of arms of the Copes and Drydens, standing for the union of John Dryden and Elizabeth Cope. Over the arms is a sunburst containing the Tetragrammaton (Hebrew letters symbolising the name of God). On the back wall of the painted room are a lantern clock and a caged bird, both "indispensable elements of fashionable late 16th century interiors" (Barber 2018). The tie beam is also painted,

though with a separate scheme to that on the wall. The design comprises intertwined curving leaves and fronds and at the centre is a Latin couplet within a rectangular cartouche. Latin couplets with moralistic messages are also found on the panelling in the Winter Parlour. The beam fully spans the width of the west range and continues out of the Sitting Room and over the stair well. The painted decoration is confined to the room, indicating that the stairwell was in place when the wall was painted. Faint traces of painted decoration can also be found on the timber frame of the stair well and adjacent partition in the Sitting Room.

The room is crossed by two tie beams underlying roof trusses N6 and N7, and these divide the room into three roughly equal sized parts. One beam is known to have overlain a former partition wall and the underside of the other displays defunct mortice and peg slots for a former wall frame. The easternmost beam is at its southern end joined to the centre of the tie beam of the timber-framed bay. When viewed from in the attic space it can be seen that the beam is raised over the top of the tie beam and projects a little way beyond where it is crudely truncated (note: The join between the two timbers is not visible; given the difference in height and that the bridging beam is continued past the tie beam, it is possible that the bridging beam may be lapped over the top of the tie beam rather than jointed to the side). The bridging beam has fairly deep chamfers and runout and stepped stops at both ends. The north end of the beam has a new piece cut into it, likely a 1980s repair. This beam formerly spanned the top of a timber partition wall which is partly visible in an oblique 1981 photograph of the room held at the house office. The underside of the bridging beam doesn't show any obvious joints for a wall frame and the two were probably not keyed. A wooden framed window was built into the wall.

The western tie beam joins the north wall adjacent to the bay window and continues the line of the western elevation. The beam has deeply chamfered edges with runout and stepped stops at both ends and the underside has regularly spaced empty mortice slots with peg holes indicating a former partition (P1). It was noted that several of the mortice slots are chisel cut with rectangular outlines while others had rounded ends and circular brace and bit marks could be seem within the slots. The beam has a significant eastward slope with a 360mm difference between the two ends. This subsidence, which is also carried into the overlying roof truss (truss N7), was mitigated by the addition of timber posts set on shaped brackets projecting from the walls. Wooden pads are set between the underside of the beam and the posts and at the north end the pad interrupts the position of a mortice slot and the chamfer stop, suggesting that the partition wall was no longer in place at the time this work was carried out, or perhaps was removed at that time.

The timber-framed stairwell forms an irregular square plan and is formed by posts joined at the ceiling and floor, with tenoned and pegged mid-height rails. Scars of hinge plates can be seen on the corner post and these relate to the former room arrangement which was removed during restoration works. Adjacent to the painted wall is a defunct plank and ledged door with wooden latch and fastener. A plaque on the door reads *1st Women Sers Room* and it formerly provided access to the garret space which was previously utilised as accommodation space for domestic staff. When viewed from the other side, the doorway has been fully plastered over.

A timber-framed partition wall (P2) is located adjacent to the stairwell and partly divides the east and west sides of the room (Figs 173, 180). The wall comprises upright posts joined by staggered rails and has a doorframe with short studs over. The upper and lower beams are not visible. The bottom of the doorway is level with the lower floor level and it is unclear if the frame was integral to the original construction of the partition or a later insertion; the latter is more likely. The two northern posts each have a defunct mortice and peg joint at mid-height, and these are roughly aligned with each other, indicating former westward horizontal rails. The truncated end of a former rail

has also been left in situ at the top of northernmost post. This evidence for two former rails or partitions set at a distance of 1m would indicate a short corridor or passageway leading to a doorway in the partition wall. This arrangement would clash with the north-south partition suggested by the defunct slots on the underside of the adjacent tie beam. The partition is partly continued down into the Winter Parlour where it supports the panelling over the entrance. This part of the south wall is off-set slightly forward from the main span of the wall and the studs with lath and plaster are visible from inside the void over the Winter Parlour lobby.

At the time of the 1980s restoration works the western part of the room had a lower floor level to the eastern part, with the change in level aligned with this partition, and visible now only adjacent to the low door to the stairwell (Fig 178). A short flight of steps provided access between the two floors. During this survey two small inspection hatches in the floorboards to each side of the partition wall were lifted in order to examine the underfloor space. Due to limited access this could only be carried out by lowering a camera into the space and taking pictures at arm's length. Unfortunately it was not possible to survey this space as part of the 3D laser survey. It was possible to see that the two northern posts of the partition wall descend into the under floor space where they are both tenoned into horizontal beams truncated at both ends and exposing the tenons in their sockets (Figs 173, 181). The top of a of lath and plastered stud wall (P3), *c*2m in width is visible under the floor and is continued down to the Winter Parlour where it seals the gap between the masonry chimney stack and stops adjacent to the angled wall of the lobby. The panelling which includes the buffet surrounds is carried on this wall. The horizontal beams into which the posts of partition P2 are tenoned are truncated in both directions showing that the two former parallel partitions extended to both sides of the wall and were removed when the Winter Parlour was created.

The joists over the Winter Parlour ceiling are supported by an east-west bridging beam positioned centrally to the projecting bay, and which at its eastern end is embedded in the corner of the masonry chimney stack. The joists are placed on edge and are joined to the beam by soffit tenons with diminished haunches. The upper edges of the beam are ledged to receive the floor boards so that when the floor surface was in place the top of the beam would have been visible. A single floor board remains *in situ* and is overlain by the truncated beam supporting the northern post of the partition P2, with a thin pad placed between them. The removal of the floor boards has left the adjacent post of P2 without any means of support.

The western part of the room has a painted plaster ceiling which at its eastern end is bounded by the tie beam (Fig 179). This area is labelled as *Housekeeper's Room* on a series of drawings of the ceiling, dated 1863 by Sir Henry Dryden (D(CA)471 1863). The decorative scheme comprises yellow painted geometric patterns in the Jacobean style and, in keeping with scheme in the Winter Parlour incorporates a grid of monochrome shields containing heraldic elements representing prominent local families such as the Copes and Montagues. The decorative grid appears to be copied from a similar grid design published by Serlio as appropriate for a glazing pattern or knot garden design (Barber 2018). It is significant that this ceiling stops at the beam as it suggests that the mortice slots on the beam's underside are in situ rather than simply a result of timber re-use, and formerly partitioned the western end of the room. A partition at this location however would create a *c*200mm gap against the earlier partition, P2, which includes a doorway into the stairwell. Given the ad hoc timber-work and framing recorded in the Winter Parlour and around the stairwell, it would not be surprising if a double-wall arrangement with trapped space was created here. The mortices on the underside of the tie beam stop level with the door to the stairwell and suggest that the doorway was kept open. Alternatively, the partitioning of the western end of the room would have disconnected that area from the doorway to the Long

Gallery and it is possible that the current doorway to the stair landing, as well as an associated rearrangement of that stair, were carried out as a result of this partitioning.

The room's only fireplace is located adjacent to the bay window in the north wall and the hearth is located at the edge of the drop to the former lower floor (Figs 182, 183). The fireplace is stone-built with a four-centred arch opening and elaborate moulding matching that of the Winter Parlour fireplace though with plain spandrels (Fig 232). The reveals and fire back are composed of narrow bricks measuring 240-250mm x 105-100mm x 45-50mm with five courses 280mm in height. The bricks are mortared and instead of being recessed between the bricks the mortar is projected out to form raised lines between the courses. The dimensions of the bricks suggest a mid to late 16th-century date; if so, this would be a rare use and appearance of early brickwork in the county. The hearth bricks are much later and measure 215-225mm x 106-110mm.

At the centre of the fireback is a panel of thin stone tiles arranged in two diagonal courses forming a chevron pattern, and separated a course of two larger stones laid flat (Fig 183). A course of diagonal stones at the base of the fireback has become severely degraded due to burning.

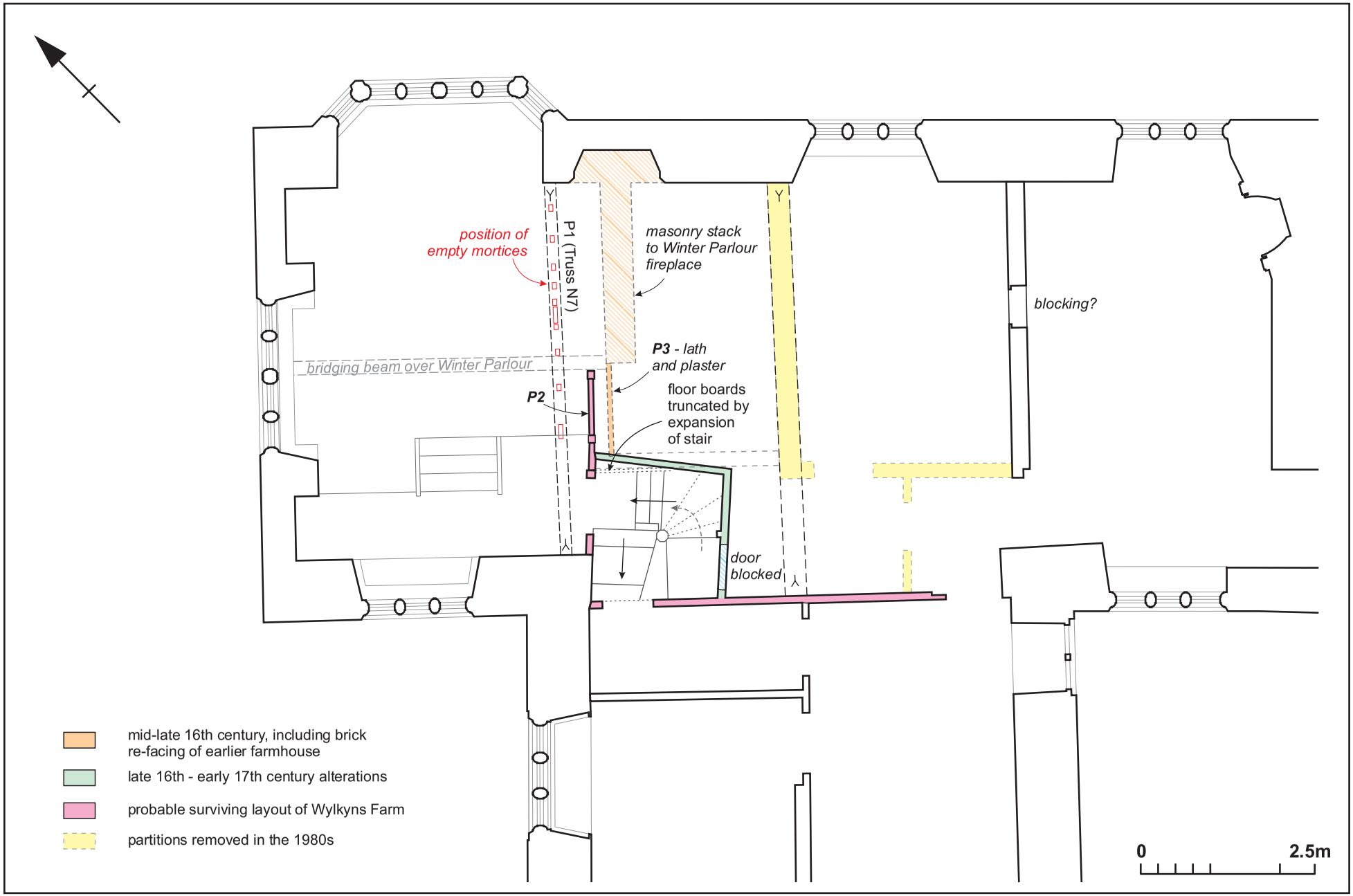
Within the fire opening is a decorative cast iron grate back with the date and initials 1588 / IFC set in a rounded panel at the top. The main part of the grate back is divided into three panels: the central panel has a large central anchor flanked by fleur de lys in the upper corners and three flowers below. The side panels have large simplistic stalk and fruit (or leaf) designs. This item is not original to the house but rather is a recent addition to supplement the collection; the date and initials therefore bear no relevance to the phasing of the house or this room.

The fireplaces in the Winter Parlour and Sitting Room are served by the same chimney. The lower fireplace however is set underneath the Sitting Room floor and in order to function, its flue must be set at a steep northward angle to join it to the north wall where the chimney is located.

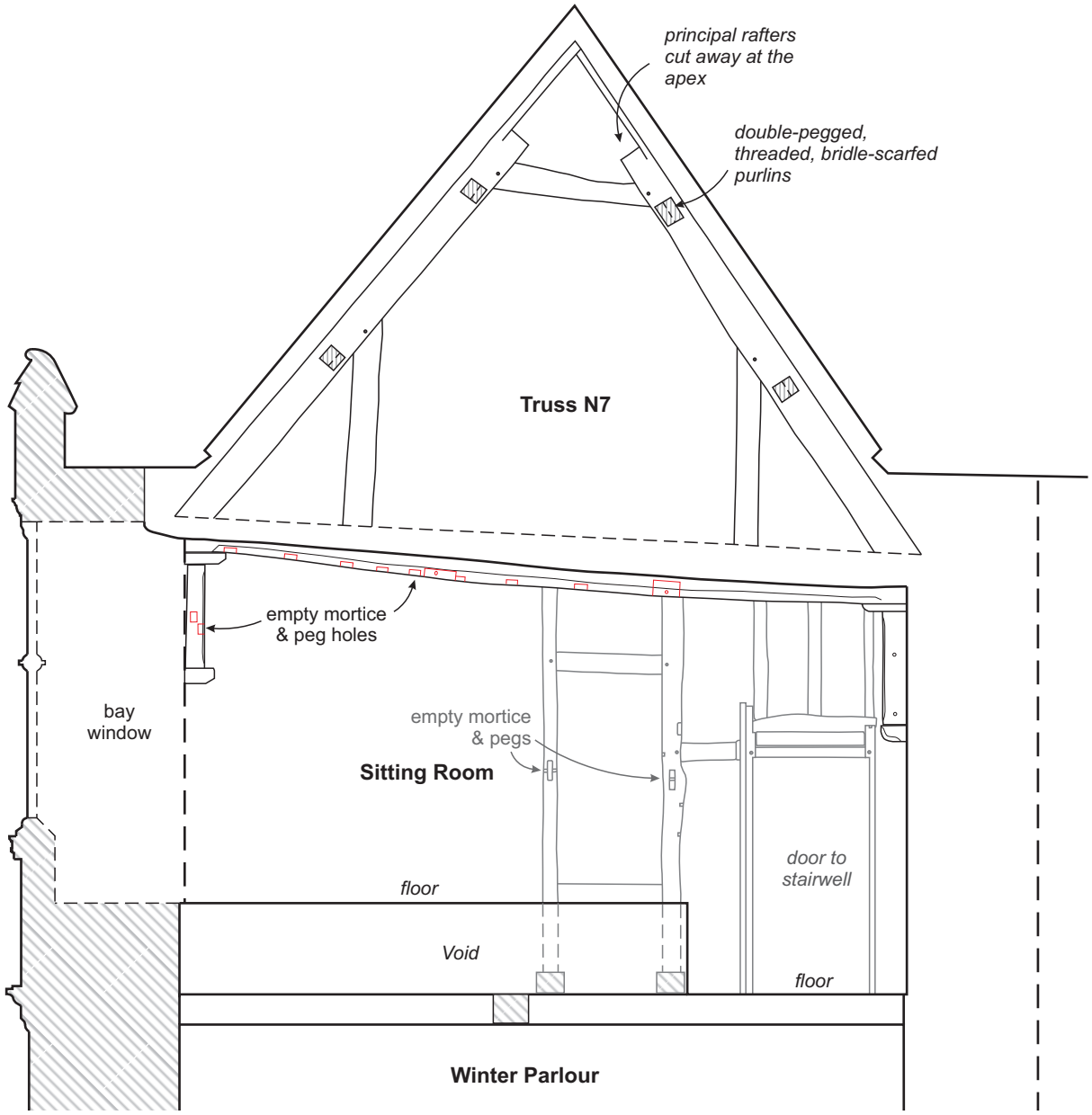
The floor over the western projecting bay, which was raised to be level across the room, is supported over modern timber joists and RSJs. The joists supporting the main floor are carried on the masonry chimney and over the top of partition P3. Interestingly approximately two courses of loose stone were added over the top of the partition, in between the joists and this was initially thought to be the remains of a truncated wall.

The current floor boards were added during the restoration works and it was revealed that the floor level was raised 1" by the placing of thin rails over the existing joists. It is unclear if this rise was applied across the entire floor or if it was a means of levelling a slightl slope in the room. Short lengths of the original boards remain *in situ* under the current floor, and pass underneath the stairwell wall and are visible in the side of the stair between the mezzanine corridor and Sitting Room landing, where they were crudely truncated to allow for the insertion or enlargement of the stair.

Scale 1:75(A4)

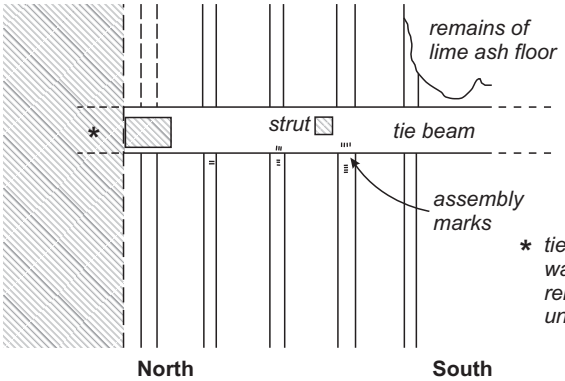


Plan of the north-west Sitting Room Fig 171

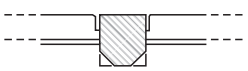


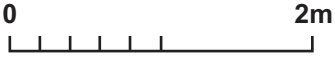
Plan of truss, tie beam and joists

Truss N6

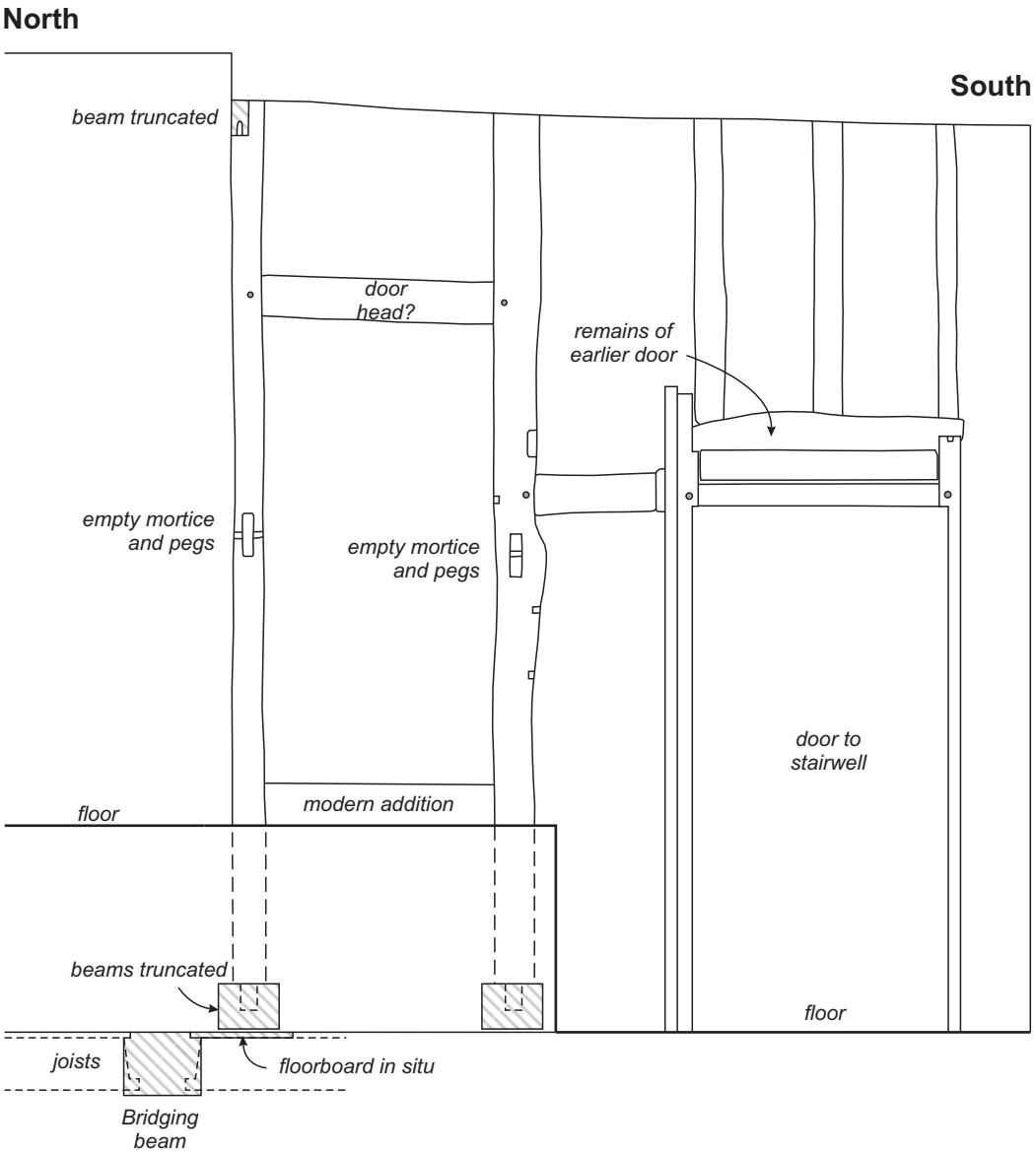


Section of tie beam & joists

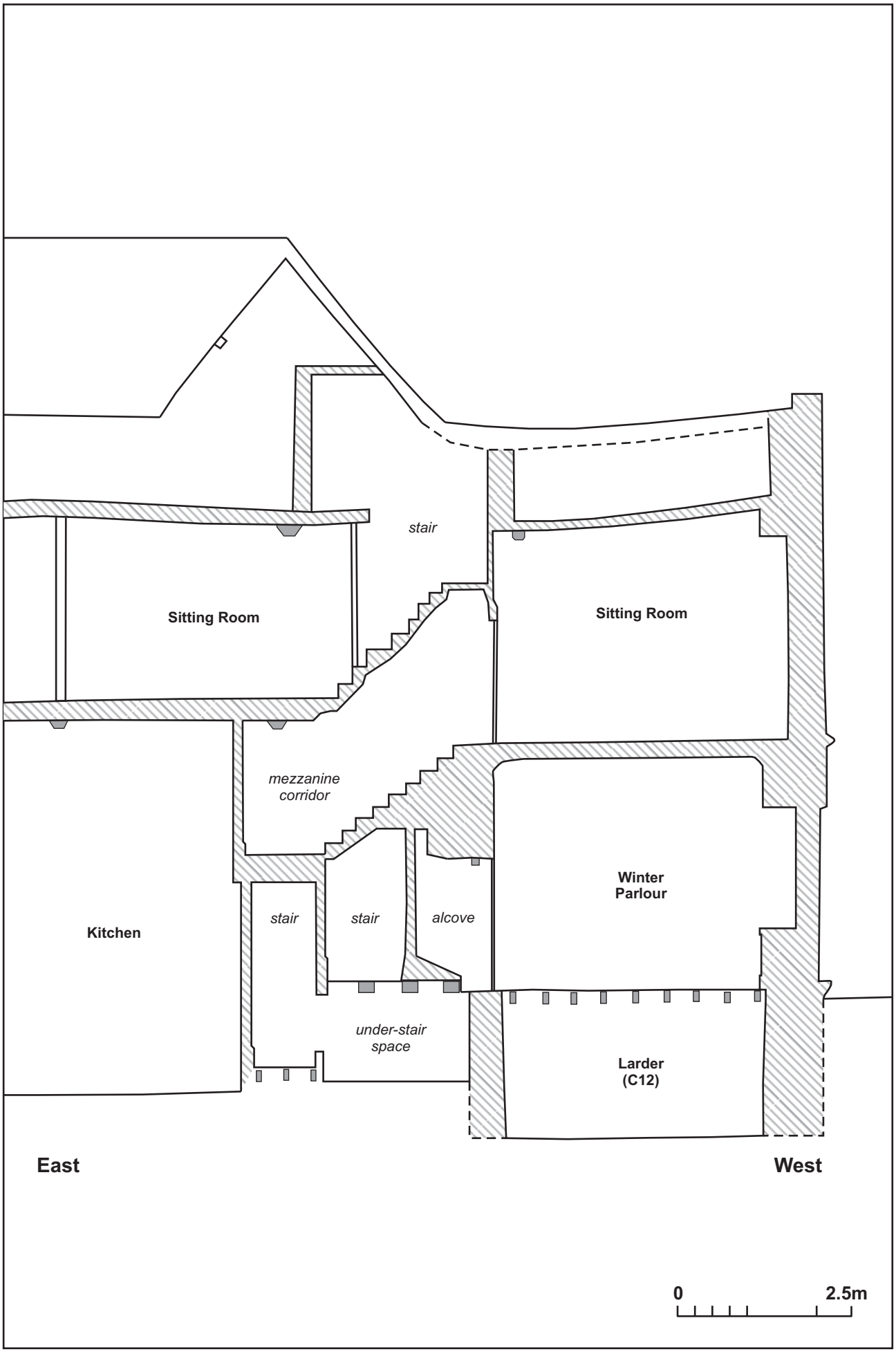




Scale 1:50 (A4) The Sitting Room , detail of overlying truss and ceiling arrangement Fig 172



Scale 1:25 The Sitting Room, Partition 2 Fig 173



Scale 1:75 (A4) Section through the north-west corner of the house Fig 174

The painted wall of the Sitting Room Fig 175

The stairwell viewed from the Sitting Room Fig 176

Truncated floorboards below the stairwell wall, viewed from the stair Fig 177

1980s photograph of the Sitting Room; note the lower floor and former partition with window Fig 178

The Sitting Room, looking south; showing the extent of sloping of the ceiling Fig 179

The stair partition and tie beam with bracket Fig 180

View under the floor; showing the truncated beam under the partition, lath and plaster partition beyond, and the bridging beam and floor board Fig 181

The Sitting Room fireplace Fig 182

Detail of the fireplace Fig 183

9.9. Staff Room

The 1717 house inventory appears to identify this room as a former Nursery however its current appearance is entirely modern and it serves as a tea room for the house staff and volunteers. The room is enclosed from the adjacent passageway by a modern and somewhat out of place timber frame and plank partition in which are set a central door and flanking windows. The door is a re-used 18th or 19th-century six-panel door which has been re-hung from its former opening direction.

In the north-east corner of the room is a fireplace set an angle to the intersection of the east and north walls. The fireplace has a simple stone surround similar in style to the marble fireplaces of the south range and the stone fireplace in the Nursery. The jambs and lintel are lightly beaded to the fire opening and have hollow mouldings on the outer edges. The chimney flue is coursed stone and the hearth is formed of bricks flanked by flag stones. The chimney angle extends through the floor and descends into the Kitchen, stopping at a timber beam set an angle between the east and north walls. It is evident that a floor level previously extended over the kitchen and the chimney appears to descend to that missing level; it is unclear if it ever extended to ground level.

Adjacent to the staff room is a straight stair that links the disparate levels of the west and east halves of the north range. The angle of the stair base is visible in the ceiling of the Kitchen and at its base the stair is merged into the adjacent winder stair between ground and first floor levels. The stair has oak treads and the sides are lined with planks. The base of the stair is enclosed by a four panel door with raised panels.

The 1980s architects' plan of the house depicts dividers, perhaps cupboards against the eastern wall. No views of these were found and no evidence for them was noted during this survey.

9.10. House Office and Privy

The House Office occupies the southern extent of the east range and is in two parts, also with access to the upper room of the adjoining Privy / Water Closet block. The southern part of the room is elevated slightly from the main office and this is likely an alteration caused by the need to provide cellar access (See Section 14). The ceiling level is also higher than in the northern part of the room, as discussed in Section 13.1). Both rooms are fairly plain with painted and plastered walls and ceilings, fitted with modern electrical lights and switches and carpeted. It is possible that the rooms were formerly wainscoted, continuing the scheme evident in the adjacent corridor of the east range. The wall and ceiling joins at the east and west are angled as the room is partly held in the roof space and defunct lath and plaster marks on the overlying truss collars suggests that the ceiling was formerly higher. In the east corner of the south wall is a roughly square indentation perhaps relating to a former opening between the two parts of the room.

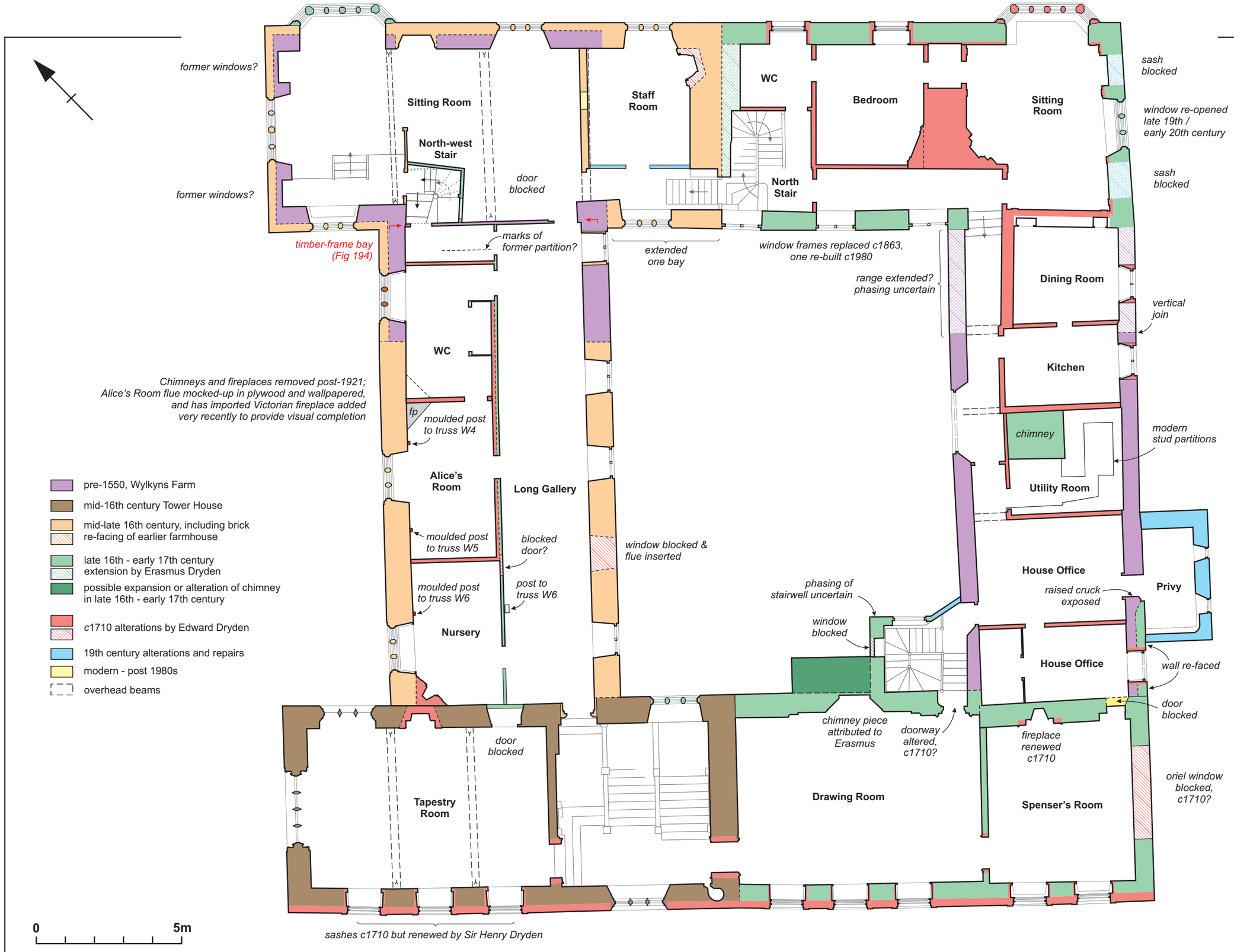
A walk-in cupboard has been created at the west side of the southern room and is accessed through a six-panel door, likely formed of recycled panelling. The main feature of note in this area is the exposed raised cruck which forms the southern jamb of the doorway to the privy, in which the end of the bridging beam is also visible. This feature is discussed in detail in Section 13.1.

The privy is sparsely furnished with modern lavatory fittings. The alcove behind the toilet relates to a former water tank. The unusual double ridge and central valley forms an interesting ceiling to this room. Some idea as to the former usage of the two parts of the office can be determined from Sir Henry's 1872 plan and section of the privy block in which the floor levels of the two areas are projected into the privy. The higher level floor of the southern room is labelled as *Floor of Dressing Room* and the lower level as

Floor of Lobby. It is possible that the upper room of the privy block was formerly separated into two by a partition set under the roof valley but any such arrangement was no longer present by 1872.

The doorway to the privy has a much earlier appearance than the other doors in the house office and comprises three oak planks with horizontal bracing. These elements are held together with crude iron nails driven through the planks and braces and folded over to make secure. The door is swung on crude pintle-mounted iron strap hinges with spearhead ends and these are secured by large nails. The frame is also oak, tenoned and pegged. The door formerly had latches for which the fasteners remain *in situ* on the frame.

The southern room formerly had a doorway through to Spenser's Room but this route was blocked by the National Trust. An adjacent cross-window has wooden shutters and a skirting scheme which is reminiscent of those on the sash windows of the south range.



Scale 1:125 (A3)

First floor plan Fig 184

10 MEZZANINE LEVEL

The rooms of this level and the corridor leading to them have to some degree become dislocated from the primary circulation spaces and this area effectively represents a 'lost' floor level that likely predates the Dryden house and formerly fully occupied the pre-existing farmhouse (Fig 201). A large part of this floor was removed with the expansion of the kitchen and by the heightening of the Winter Parlour. It is unclear if the current stair has its origins in the earlier building or was a creation of John Dryden; certainly it has undergone at least one major alteration and widening. The rooms have a compact ceiling height typical of domestic rooms of the period and comparable to those remaining in the upper level of the Tower.

10.1. North-western Stair

This stair is not a continuous rise but instead comprises several slightly disconnected parts, rising from the Kitchen to a landing outside of the Winter Parlour and from there leading to the mezzanine level corridor (Fig 185). The ascent is continued to mid-level landings at the Sitting Room and Long Gallery and thence to the Garret space, retaining the characteristics of spiral stair at its topmost levels.

It is possible to gain access to the underside of the stair at its lowest level via a doorway in the kitchen. As described earlier in this report, the walls between the stair and kitchen are lath and stud plastered partitions (Fig 186). The studs are reused and display numerous defunct joist slots and peg holes and several have axe cut V profile grooves. The stair supporting structure and indeed the stair itself is a very ad hoc arrangement utilising recycled timbers. The under-stair space is bounded to the south by the full height timber-framed wall whose lower posts come to rest on an irregular stone-built dwarf wall. This short wall is continued around to the west as the cellar wall. The primary vertical stair support is an octagonal oak newel post into which the treads and risers are joined. A shallow and elongated bridle joint is exposed on the side of the post near the top. The first stair landing is supported on a timber frame with joists which forms the ceiling of the under-stair space. The frame of re-used timbers with defunct mortices is at one corner jointed into the octagonal newel post and at the south side is carried on a shaped bracket projecting from the stone wall. The north-west corner of the landing frame is supported on a square-section post which stops short of the floor and is joined by a pegged bridle scarf to a short post rising from the floor (Fig 187). A shaped wooden bracket pegged to the top of the post holds the end of the northern framing beam (Fig 188). Below this bracket is a defunct mortice with truncated tenon in situ. The octagonal and square section posts are joined at the base to an oak beam embedded in the brick floor.

The steps are wrapped around the stone pier to the first landing. The risers are shaped to accommodate the moulding of the pier's plinth and the treads are supported on a crude arrangement of angled battens and these again are re-used, displaying lath marks. The landing is bound to the south by a timber-framed wall which is part of the full height timber framed partition (Fig 189). The visible area comprises a corner post and short studs pegged and tenoned to a mid-height rail. Incised scribe marks and Roman numeral assembly marks are visible at the joint of the studs to the rail and where the rail is joined to the corner post (Fig 190). Circular pegs were used at the stud and rail joint but a square peg was utilised at the rail and post joint. The beam at the top of the wall is plastered over and continues past the landing into the adjacent corridor where it supports joists over a short passage adjacent to the Winter Parlour. The passage and the stair landing are separated by a stud wall and door. It is not clear if this wall abuts or is joined into the main partition wall. The door is formed of planks with ledges nailed to the oak planks. It is swung on early 17th century tapered strap hinges with spearhead ends and has a string-pulled 17th century wooden latch and fastener. The doorway is framed by a slightly arched wooden lintel pegged into the

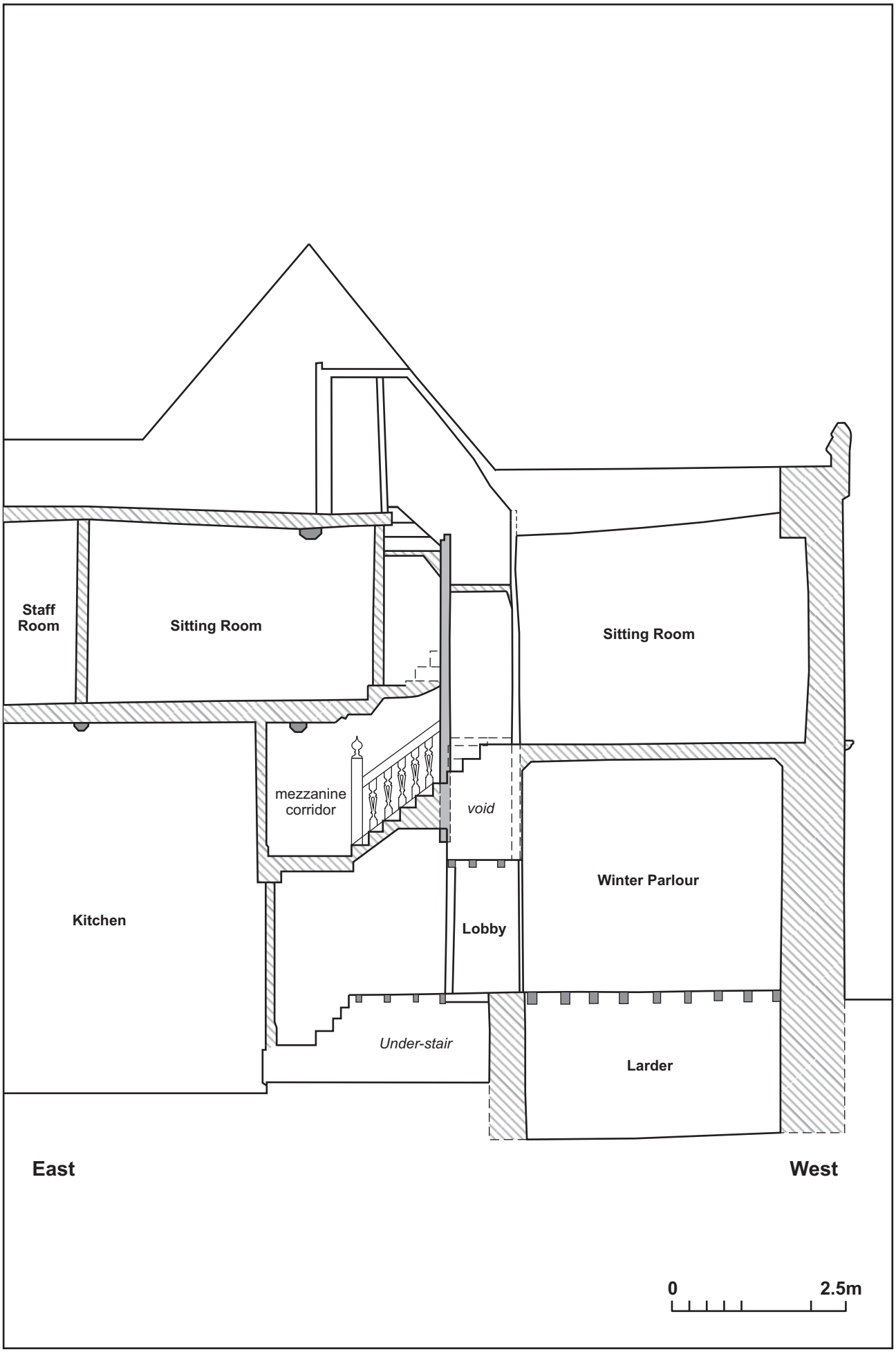
jambs. Just above the doorway is the bottom of an octagonal newel post which rises from here to Garret level. It is unclear how this post is supported as the base appears to be suspended through the ceiling. The octagonal post noted in the under stair space rises through the landing and terminates at mezzanine level.

From the first landing a straight flight of steps rises to the mezzanine corridor (Fig 191). The underside of this stair is suspended over the kitchen as an angled projection. Splat balusters with moulded hand rails span the edge of the corridor and end at a square section newel post with defunct mortice for a former finial. The balusters taper from the top towards the bottom, a feature most prevalent on early 17th century examples; later balusters generally taper from bottom to top (Hall 2011). At the south end the balusters end with a plank-like newel post with shaped crown.

The stair from mezzanine to Long Gallery level has a series of awkwardly angled steps to accommodate entrances to the Sitting Room and Long Gallery (Figs 192, 193). It has been noted that the stair was either a complete insertion or an expansion and remodelling of an original stair and this is evidenced by a series of crudely truncated floor boards surviving underneath the stairwell wall on the north side of the stair rise. The floorboards measure *c*110mm in width and are 50mm in thickness, and each has a lip and a ledge at either end so that the boards are consecutively overlapped at the edges.

The boards are supported on an east-west beam, also truncated, which is joined into the north-south bridging beam that spans the length of the mezzanine corridor. When initially built, the stair likely took a winder form with the steps springing from the octagonal newel post and this form partly survives at the upper part of the stair where it rises to the attic. Several of the winder stairs were removed and the stair rise was modified to provide straight flights to the Sitting Room and Long Gallery.

A landing is located adjacent to the Long Gallery door at the base of the attic stair. There was formerly access to this landing from the Sitting Room where a door labelled *1st Women Sers Room* remains in situ though the back of the doorway is now blocked and plastered over.



Scale 1:75 (A4) Section through the north-west stair Fig 185

The under-stair space, looking east Fig 186

The under-stair space; note stone walls and defunct joints in supporting post Fig 187

Bracket supporting the stair frame; note empty mortice and peg holes on rail Fig 188

Part of the timber-frame bay adjacent to the Kitchen Fig 189

Detail of framing with faint assembly marks and scribe lines Fig 190

The mezzanine corridor, looking south Fig 191

The stairwell approach to the Sitting Room Fig 192

The arrangement of stairs within the stairwell Fig 193

10.2. Timber-framed bay

During the course of this survey it became apparent that a timber-framed bay division survived within the house (Fig 194). This was positioned at the join between the west and north ranges and formerly subdivided the building at that position but had been partly truncated at ground level when the kitchen was expanded. The various parts of the bay division as they appear in different parts of the house are described in several sections of this report but it is worth also providing an overview of the whole frame.

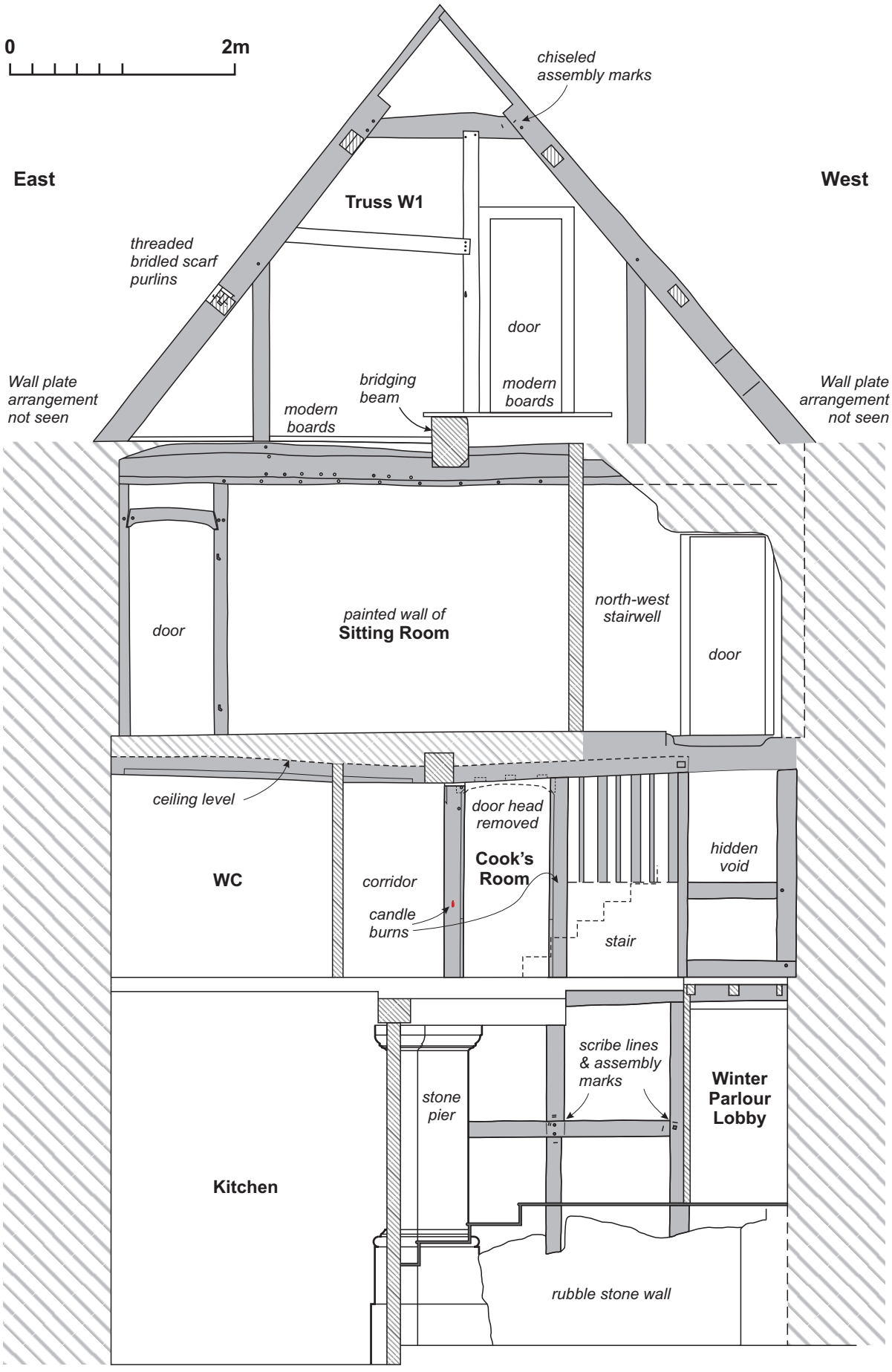
The bay rises from ground level in the kitchen through the mezzanine and first floor levels and into the roof where it supports one of the trusses (Truss W1). The full frame, including truss, is 6.1m wide and 12m from kitchen floor to roof apex. The frame comprises two substantial tie beams at first floor and mezzanine levels, possibly with another over part of the kitchen ceiling though this may have been removed with the expansion of the kitchen as the ceiling thickness would not accommodate a beam matching in width those at the upper levels of the frame. Spanning between the tie beams are regularly spaced studs with tenon and pegged mid-height rails displaying scribe marks and assembly marks at the joints.

The frame is carried over a crude stone wall which forms the back of the north-west stair and the ends of the studs can be seen rising from the stonework. Adjacent to the stair is the unusual stone pier which is positioned centrally to the frame and was likely added to carry its weight when the former tie beam and lower eastern studs were removed. This report suggests that the original floor level in this part of the house may have been at the height of the current Hall and Winter Parlour but was lowered when Erasmus extended the house eastward and expanded the kitchen to create the current high ceiling and prominent cooking ranges. This lowering may have required the construction of an underlying support for the bay since it was built to match the higher level floor, hence the stone wall carrying the western studs.

At mezzanine level a bridging beam is joined to the centre of the ceiling level tie beam and the posts for a door jamb are joined to the underside of the tie beam. The inside face of the wall, within Cook's Room, is comprised of timber staves set between the studs and the wall is covered with planks and has decorative paintwork. The underside of the tie beam, to the east of the doorway is chamfered with stops and no mortices for former studs are visible, suggesting that in this area it spanned over a room rather than acting as a partition between rooms.

At first floor level the bay wall bounds the back of the Sitting Room where it has been given an elaborate decorative paint scheme commemorating the marriage of John Dryden and Elizabeth Cope. A series of peg holes along the lower edge of the tie beam likely indicate the positions of light studs. At the far eastern side of the frame at this level is a doorway between the Sitting Room and Long Gallery and this feature is described in more detail in Section 9.4. At the far western side is another door, this one allowing entry between the north-west stair and Long Gallery. The upper surface of the tie beam, spanning across the base of the doorway has been truncated and rounded off to accommodate the insertion of this later door. The ceiling level drops down around the stair and hides a portion of the tie beam. As described in Section 9.8, the bridging beam over the Sitting Room is positioned quite high to the tie beam and when viewed in the attic passes over the top of the tie beam, ending at a crude truncation.

The truss, W1, comprises heavy oak principal rafters with threaded purlins and like all of the trusses of the west range and western part of the north range has an unusual design in which the principal rafters are deliberately reduced at the apex. The roof is described in Section 13.3.



Scale 1:50 (A4)

The timber-framed bay Fig 194

10.3. Corridor

The mezzanine corridor acts as an extended landing to the staircase leading from the Long Gallery to the Kitchen while providing access to the three rooms at this level. The corridor ceiling is level with that in the Kitchen and the two spaces are separated by the corridor wall. It is likely that the mezzanine level once extended beyond its current limits and was reduced to its present extent to allow for the raising of the Kitchen ceiling. This is evidenced by the awkward kink at the northern end of the corridor where it is angled outward to prevent a window from being blocked. Similarly the external wall was partly truncated back to further widen the space around the window and allow natural light into the corridor.

Spanning the length of the corridor is an oak bridging beam with deep chamfers. It is embedded in the external wall at its northern end, and to the south is joined into the timber-framed wall (Figs 194, 200). The chamfers terminate at ogee stops where they meet the beam but at the north end simply run up to the wall. An angled plank on edge was inserted into the intersection of the bridging beam and timber-framed wall and this formerly framed a 19th-century doorway.

A cupboard or linen closet has been constructed in the north-west corner of the corridor. The planks framing the door have groups of ventilating perforations in circular patterns as well as a figure of eight. Whilst the door itself is bespoke, the H-hinges are likely recycled.

A cupboard is built into the remnant space adjacent to the stair and is framed on one side by the angle of the stair to the Long Gallery, and to the west the timber frame wall forms the back of another remnant space: the cupboard at the back of the Winter Parlour. A wooden shelf is set across the west wall and it has been surmised that the cupboard may have served as a minor sleeping space for a member of the house staff. The floor is raised one step higher than the mezzanine floor level. The plank and ledge door is swung on H-hinges and is fitted with a rim lock with wooden lock case.

A third cupboard has been created in the space between the Cook's Room and the quarter turn of the stair. A beam with defunct joints retaining truncated tenons spans across the cupboard threshold and supports the base of the stair. The room is enclosed from the stair by a plank partition which also carries around the back of the cupboard, creating another lost space or void which can only be examined from above the Winter Parlour buffet.

10.4. Cook's Room

This is a compact room, well lit by a large window to the west, and with timber framed walls at the north and east (Fig 195). The east wall is part of the timber-framed bay. The ceiling is level with that of the Hall and the south wall forms the upper part of the Hall wall.

The room is entered from the north through a plank door with applied moulded fillets on both faces forming nine rectangular panels (Fig 232). The door does not appear to be a match for the doorway in which it is located. The posts framing the doorway have chamfered edges and at the top of the door defunct pegs and the perpendicular change in direction of the chamfer indicate a missing door head (Fig 194). At the top the posts are tenoned into one of the principal framing rails of the full height partition. A steel plate has latterly been inserted over the top of the outer door post and a new piece of timber affixed. A single candle taper burn was noted on the left post. The door is swung on 17th-century tapered strap hinges which pass underneath the fillets. An early iron rim lock is installed on the door and a pivot for a servant's bell is installed in the upper corner of the room adjacent to the door. Another servant’s bell pivot with attached pull is located on the south-east corner of the room.

Most of the north wall is plastered however a panel has been left with the underlying fabric exposed in order to provide a glimpse of the room's former decorative scheme (Fig 197). Interspersed between the primary posts and mid height rail are smaller studs and these in turn are in two sizes, with rectangular studs set between smaller square-section staves turned at an angle to the wall face. Over these are laid wide planks on which was painted a square frame in red paint and black detail. The panels between the frame are painted white with black painted decorative motifs. Interestingly, at the edge of the boards the decorations are truncated and the paint scheme is not continued onto the door frame where a different paint scheme survives. This also comprises a mid-level band, roughly aligned with but wider than that of the boards and the post is painted in red and yellow above and below this band. The band has black stripes and a white decorative motif and black stripes are painted at the top of the post. There are two candle taper burns and both are located at mid-height and overlie the paint scheme.

The east wall is also timber framed with a mid-height rail; it is aligned with the post which frames the doorway but is not tied into it. Close examination reveals that traces of a decorative paint scheme remain on the doorframe where the east wall abuts it, thus indicating that the partitioning of the space is a later alteration.

The south wall is covered with oak panelling with bolection moulding to the edges and chamfered dust ledges. The panelling is tenon and pegged and scribed set-out marks are visible on many of the intersections (Fig 196). The panelling appears to incorporate a former door frame and two of the stiles or jambs form a frame which is disconnected from the rest of the wall. The faint marks of former cockshead hinges are visible at the top and bottom of the jambs. It has been suggested that this door would have opened onto a balcony over the Hall screens passage; although this survey does not rule out this possibility, it also possible that this is reused panelling complete with an inherited door which was fixed in place to the frame. An oak beam spans across the ceiling close to the south wall and continues through into the adjacent room.

The upper part of a tall stone mullion window serves as a window to this room and when viewed from outside the floor is visible through the window. A large beam spans across the recess in the west wall.

10.5. Parlour Maid's Room and adjacent WC

This room is small and austere, with no decoration present and no evidence for a former decorative scheme visible (Fig 198). The partitioning of this room from the adjacent WC appears to have been a relatively recent alteration and evidence in the Cook's Room suggests that all three spaces formerly comprised a single unit. The beam which spans the ceiling at the back of the room is a continuation of that recorded in the adjacent room and several defunct joints are visible on the south underside edge (Fig 199).

In the east wall is a two light chamfer mullion window, one of only a few windows in the house with this moulding. Due to the thickness of the wall the window is deeply set in the splayed reveals.

The WC displays few features of interest having been wainscotted and containing a suite of bathroom fittings. The exposed beam which crosses the ceiling is part of the full height timber-framed partition identified in this part of the house.

Cook’s Room, looking south Fig 195

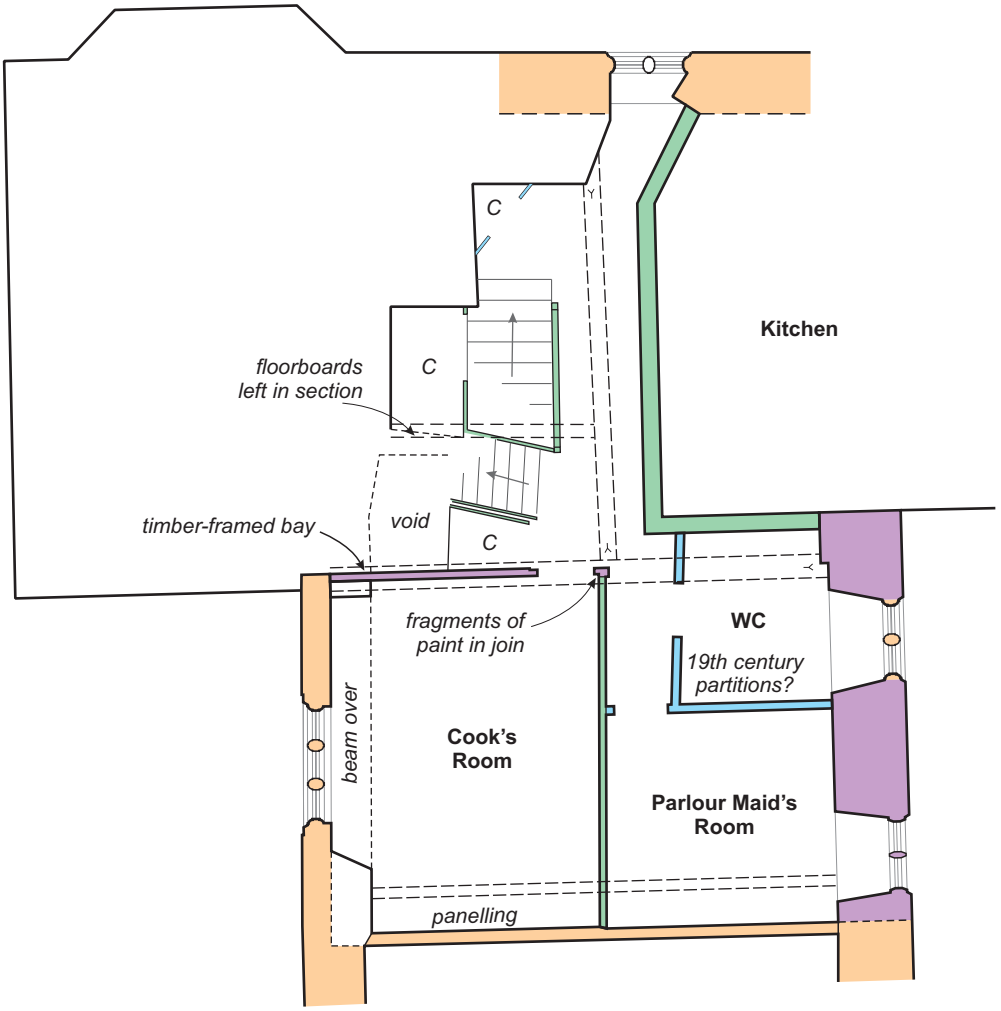
Detail of pegs and scribe lines on the panelling of the south wall Fig 196

Detail of painted wall in Cook’s Room Fig 197

Parlour Maid's Room Fig 198

Defunct joist slots on the overhead beam Fig 199

Detail of the beam arrangement adjacent to the mezzanine rooms Fig 200



pre-1551, Wylkyns Farm

1551-1584

late 16th - early 17th century

19th century

tie beams and overhead timbers

0 5m

Scale 1:100 (A4) Plan of the Mezzanine level Fig 201

11 PRIVATE APARTMENT, NORTH RANGE

The apartment encompasses the upper floor of the east range and the first and second floors at the north-east corner of the house, and these were retained as private rooms outside of the publically accessible guided route.

11.1. First Floor, Corridor, Utilities, Kitchen and Dining Room

The first floor of the east range comprises a corridor spanning along the western side linking a Utility Room, Kitchen and Dining Room. At its southern end the corridor connects to the house office, and to the north a short flight of steps drops to the north range. From here the corridor continues along the south side of the north range towards the north range stair that rises from ground level to the second floor.

The east range rooms and corridor are partly housed in the roof space from which they are enclosed by light ceilings. The corridor has a separate ceiling structure to the adjacent rooms, with an arch lath and plaster covering. The ceiling is interrupted at intervals by the ends of the roof trusses as they descend to the eaves and these are disguised as dropped arches. A servant's bell wire pivot remains *in situ* against one of these arches.

The corridor is lit by a four-light wood-frame window with small rectangular pattern glazing and iron saddle bars. Due to the level of the floor in relation to the eaves, the window sill is at ground level. An uneven raised line along the length of the north corridor wall suggests that it formerly had wainscot panelling to dado level and this continued down the stair at the northern end.

The northern span of the corridor has a high ceiling and is well lit by two large south-facing windows. The walls have a simple skirting scheme and moulded cornices, providing a more elegant access to the principal room at this level: the Sitting Room. At the west end of the corridor is a two-panel door variant with fielded panels, set in a moulded architrave. A modern light fitting is installed between the two windows and modern radiators are installed below the sills.

The Utility Room is an L-plan space which is wrapped around the masonry chimney that rises from the Brewhouse at ground floor level. The walls are fully plastered and painted and room has nothing of historic or architectural interest. The room does however contain a doorway which allows a limited view of the room's exterior and the roof space. The Utility Room appears to be a modern creation; the 1980 plan of the house does not show the room, instead it is incorporated with the chimney stack and labelled as *Space above Brewhouse.* The walls and ceiling are composed of modern pine studwork with plasterboard.

The Kitchen and Dining Room are partly contained in the roof level. They have stud walls with lath and plaster and are enclosed from the roof space by light ceilings. The Kitchen retains little of interest save the east facing window which is described in Section 5.4. The room contains a full suite of modern kitchen cabinets and surfaces and has a tiled floor. A hatch in the ceiling provides access to the roof space over the northern part of the east range.

The Dining Room is accessed through the Kitchen and again retains little of historic or architectural interest. The walls are painted and have simple skirting boards. The ceiling is plain with no cornice. Two cupboards are built into the northern corner of the room; at the back of both cupboards are wooden boards which are likely attached to the studs which carry the panelling in the adjacent sitting room. A wooden rail or collar spans the width of the room and appears in between the boards at the back of both cupboards.

11.2. First Floor Sitting Room

This is a large room occupying a slightly irregular plan at the east end of the north range. The doorway to the Sitting Room from the corridor has an 18th century two-panel door variant set within a moulded architrave with a moulded entablature over. The door is swung on L-hinges with spearhead ends and a brass case rim lock is also installed.

The room is characterised by the white painted 18th-century panelled scheme (Fig 202). This comprises large-panel panelling with dado rail, interspersed with fluted pilasters rising from panelled plinths and crowned with disproportionate Ionic style capitals enriched with egg and dart moulding (Fig 203). The capitals are joined by a continuous architrave set a short distance below the moulded cornice. Picture rails are fixed at the top of the panels below the architrave.

Central to the east wall is a three-light ovolo mullion window which was blocked when the panelling was inserted, the panelling being wrapped into the window opening. This was flanked by two newly created sash windows that remained in use until the late 19th or early 20th century when Sir Henry Dryden had the sash windows blocked and the earlier window reinstated. The bay window at the north side of the room was likewise blocked with the insertion of the panelling and reopened by Sir Henry. The sash windows and blockings are visible on early photographs of the house.

The room is heated by an early 18th-century marbled stone fireplace of similar design to those in the south range, with plain straight jambs and lightly arched lintel and shallow linear grooves and mouldings at the edges. The fireplace is surmounted by a simple wooden shelf on small brackets. Within the fire opening is a cast iron surround and raised grate. The manufacturer stamp THE / PERFECT / GRATE BACK / E J & J PEARSON is stamped on the grate back. The back hearth is lined with bricks and marbled flagstones form the hearth proper.

The ceiling is plain and the floor fully carpeted. Pivots for servants' bells remain *in situ* on the west wall.

The sitting room and adjacent bedroom are separated by the Bakehouse chimney and the space adjacent to the chimney has been utilised for built-in cupboards and drawers.

11.3. First Floor Bedroom and WC

This room is panelled in a plainer style than the Sitting Room, lacking the pilasters and architrave level. The ceiling is plain and the floor fully carpeted. The room is lit by a single sash window in the north wall and is heated by a small fireplace in the south-east corner. The plain stone surround is reminiscent of that recorded in the west range Nursery and contains a cast iron raised grate and fireback of similar design to that in the Sitting Room and probably by the same manufacturer.

In the north-west corner is a doorway to the adjacent WC. This has a moulded architrave and a plain modern door with an early to mid 20th century knob, escutcheon and sliding bolt. Adjacent to the door is a bell pull set in a decorative brass fitting and a decorative bell pivot is set at ceiling level.

The WC is a small room with little of architectural or historic merit save the sash window in the north wall. The room has a full complement of modern bathroom fittings. The lower parts of the walls are tiled and the room has no decorative embellishment. A small hatch is located high on the west wall but could not be accessed.

11.4. North Stair

This is a dog-leg winder stair that rises from ground level to the second floor and primarily serves the private apartment at the north-east corner of the house. At the base of the stair, enclosing it from the ground floor passageway, is an oak two-panel door variant with simple beading and chamfered moulding. It is swung on H-hinges and has a wooden latch and a rim lock with wooden lock case. The treads and risers are carpeted and the lower parts of the stair walls are panelled to dado level. The inside edges of the stair and the balusters enclosing the stairwell have early 18th century turned balusters with tapered columns and moulded hand rails. The newel posts are square-section with indented cusped panels reminiscent of those on the Great Stair and are crowned with moulded newel caps. The panelling is continued only to first floor level and the walls of the upper stairwell are left plain (Fig 204).

At first floor level there is a disconnection of the stair which separates the upper and lower levels of the stair with a mid-level branch rising to the Staff Room and Sitting Room (Fig 205). This survey suggests that the first floor ceiling level was formerly *c*1m lower in order to provide greater height and prominence to the second floor Oriel Room which had an elaborate double arched ceiling. The first floor ceiling level was raised in the 18th century to create the panelled first floor sitting room while at the same time the oriel room ceiling was removed with the insertion of the chimney to the Bakehouse. This change may explain the disconnection of the stair as the rise to the new second floor level would have been too steep as a straight flight and the lower part was curved to accommodate a shallower level. It is probable that before this alteration there was no access to the north-west block and the short flight to the Sitting Room and Staff Room was added at this time. It is unclear if this stair existed prior to the 18th century or was added at that time.

In contrast to the Great Stair which serves the south range, the rooms in the north-east wing are accessed by a much more modest stair than might be expected for the grand room suggested by the former ceiling. Although no evidence was visible in the currently exposed fabric it may be possible that the current north stair represents a reduction of a formerly more substantial one.

11.5. Second floor Bedroom and WC

The layout of the second floor rooms broadly mirrors those at first floor, comprising a bedroom with adjacent WC, and a larger room at the east end of the suite.

The WC is a small space bound by the northern stair and Kitchen chimney. The room is undecorated and sparsely furnished with modern bathroom fittings. A water heater is installed in a cupboard at the side of the chimney. Adjacent to the cupboard is a small fireplace with plain surround and moulded shelf over. Within is a one-piece register grate with combined grate, fireback and frame. The room is lit by a three-light ovolo mullion window with central casement. A hatch in the ceiling provides access to the roof space over the east half of the north range.

In contrast to the panelled bedroom at first floor, the second floor bedroom is quite plain, embellished only with a simple skirting and cornice. The room is entered through a simple two-panel door swung on H-hinges and with a wooden latch and fastener. The room is lit by a three-light ovolo mullion window with central casement. Centrally to the east room is a small fireplace with plain wooden surround and shelf. Within is a cast iron frame with the grate missing.

11.6. Sir Robert's Room / Oriel Room

The bedroom is bounded by a short corridor which leads from the stair landing to the Oriel Room which is referred to on some 19th century documents as Sir Robert's Room. The room and corridor rise into the roof space and the slope of the roof is carried to eaves level at the south side of the corridor. The stair landing is lit by an arch-headed stone mullion window, which as previously described is an amalgamation of window components. The corridor has two windows, both with tenon and pegged wooden frames. Due to the level of the eaves the windows are set very low to the floor, requiring one to kneel to see out from them. The window reveals span from the floor up to the slope of the ceiling.

The door to the room is set in a round-headed frame with central "keystone". The door is panelled with the upper panels rounded to match the top of the frame. The architrave design is repeated on the inner side of the doorway though with increased moulding. In the north-west corner of the room is a walk-in cupboard built into the space adjacent to the Bakehouse chimney breast.

The room measures 5.5m x 5m with projecting bays to the east and north (Fig 206). The ceiling slopes upward from eaves level at *c*1.7m from the floor to a height of 3.3m. The lower parts of the walls are panelled; this is now painted a white colour but prior to conservation works was a brown colour with dado rail picked out in black.

To the north is a six-light ovolo mullion window set in a projecting bay. Two compass drawn graffiti marks are prominently carved on the chamfered stone sill (Figs 208, 209, 234). A nearly identical compass design can also be found on the back of one of the chairs in the Canons Ashby Dining Room and another example may be found adjacent to one of the west facing windows of the Canons Ashby stable block / gift shop. Various explanations have been proposed for the origin and meaning of such markings which can be found in a variety of contexts including domestic and ecclesiastical. It has been suggested that a great many of these markings were created by medieval masons who would have access to tools such as compasses and dividers as well as knowledge of basic geometry, however the great profusion of such markings, which can also be replicated with tools such as shears and scissors, would suggest that the practice was more widespread (Champion 2015). Such markings were a common decorative motif in Roman architecture and have been found adorning window-heads at a number of Roman British sites. In south-west England compass designs are commonly found in association with church fonts but in other churches may be found spread throughout the church, including on the parish chest. A survey of the lead roof of Beauchamp Chapel at the Church of St Mary, Warwick recorded nearly 800 graffiti, primarily shoe designs left by pilgrims and tourists, with a single instance of compass design at the edge of one of the outer panels (Bassir *et al* 2016). The marks are generally interpreted as being apotropaic in nature, providing spiritual protection and their profusion in churches indicates that such ritual markings and traditions were not at odds with prevailing religious beliefs but, as also demonstrated by candle taper burns, were part of medieval and post-medieval religious and spiritual beliefs. It is unclear however to what degree the continuation of such markings was rooted in a belief in their protective abilities and at what point they became simply a matter of tradition. The graffiti survey at Beauchamp Chapel revealed that while a great many of the earlier shoe designs had spiritual significance, others were simply following the established tradition of tracing a shoe and engraving it with ones initials.

During conservation work structural defects including outward movement were noted in the north wing, particularly in the eastern gable and oriel. These included fractures at the base of the oriel which continued to the lintel of the window below, distortion and damage to the oriel itself due to 'eccentric structural loading', vertical and horizontal distortion of the gable as a whole, and a weakening of the ground and first floor

window lintels due to the weight of the oriel. These problems were mitigated by the insertion of concrete stitches into the walling to prevent outward movement, removal of rusted cramps, and renewal of damaged timber lintels with reinforced concrete and steel beams. The timber beam spanning across the bay was replaced during conservation works by a steel RSJ, and the rafters and roof truss are supported on the beam (Fig 207).

Spanning across the ceiling is the underside of a partly truncated roof truss. This truss has an unusual form which when whole would have framed a double coved or double arched ceiling. The truss will be described in greater detail in Section 13.2. At its southern end the truss is jointed into an oak wall plate that spans the southern wall. The main part of the exposed face of the beam is flat but the underside edge has double ovolo and hollow moulding with retains traces of plaster or paint. The flat surface retains a number of roughly equal spaced shallow notches that appear to indicate the positions of former light ceiling rafters. It is unclear how the rafters would be fixed to these notches but the current ceiling covers the upper part of the beam and there may be mortice slots out of view. A number of circular peg holes, many with pegs *in situ*, are located above and slightly cutting into the mouldings across the eastern half of the beam. They appear to be in rough groupings of two or three. Similar pegs were noted in the first floor Sitting Room where they secure tenoned studs to a beam (Section 9.8). The pegs recorded on that beam also appear to be in groups of two or three and are located on the flat side face and also on the underside chamfered edge. No such holes are present along the western half of the beam. At the east end where the beam connects to the gable wall the mouldings terminate at a stepped stop. The beam appears to continue past the doorway and into the corridor but is not visible in the corridor wall. It is likely that a matching beam was formerly carried in the north wall but was removed with the insertion of the bay window. A defunct moulded beam with matching moulding pattern was found in the ceiling of the adjacent room supporting the ceiling rafters. Given the fragments of decorative plaster recovered from the former barrel vaulted ceiling of the Drawing Room, it is likely that the former ceiling would have been highly decorative.

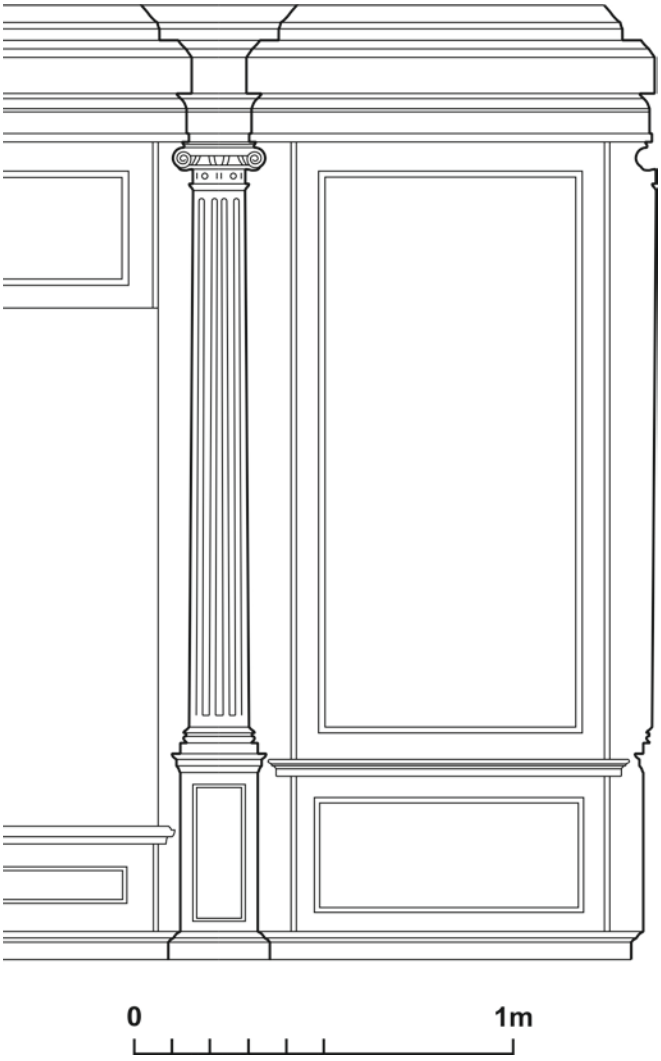
The tall oriel window is flanked by smaller lights at each side and the window silhouette appears to reflect the former double arched ceiling which when *in situ* would have framed the window. The oriel formerly had a decorative window fastening in the shape of the lion crest of the Dryden family. This element was drawn by Sir Henry Dryden in 1885 and the accompanying label identifies the room as Sir Robert's Room (ZA 468/6, Fig 233).

External photographs of the house show that a small chimney was formerly located over the north-east corner of the room. The first floor room is heated by a fireplace connecting to the Bakehouse chimney and the panelling is continuous, therefore it is likely that this former chimney connected to a small fireplace in the Oriel Room, possibly positioned at an angle between the east gable and north wall. The second floor plan in the 1980s architects' report depicts what appears to be a fireplace opening centrally to the west wall, with the flue being carried in the Bakehouse chimney. No historic views of the room were found during this survey and no evidence for this fireplace is currently visible though there is a break in the wainscot at the centre of the wall where a fireplace could have been located. Sir Henry's 1861 drawing of the Bakehouse chimney labels the four flues as serving the *Laundry / Bakehouse*, *Nursery* and *Solomon's Room*, with a fourth flue added on the west side of the chimney in 1861 to serve a fireplace in the *Batchelor's Room* (D(CA)472 1861).

The current floor level appears to be too high for the grand room suggested by the former ceiling and it may be that the floor was raised in the 18th century when the ceiling was removed. This alteration reduced the importance of the Oriel Room which was supplanted by the white panelled first floor Sitting Room. The first floor was

enlarged with a higher ceiling and fitted with sash windows and was approached by a tall corridor with large south-facing windows. Evidence for such an alteration can be seen externally on the courtyard elevation by the scar of a blocked window between the two current windows. The lintel of the blocked window is *c*0.5m lower than the current window lintels and the sill appears to be aligned with the floor level. This interpretation is however complicated by the main west elevation where the scars of former stone mullion windows can be seen at the top of the sash windows to the first floor bedroom and WC. Reducing the first floor ceiling level would result in the sills of these windows being set at floor level to the Oriel Room. This change in levels also has implications for the phasing of other features such as the northern bay windows and the string course which rises to align with the current second floor level and would suggest that the north range may have been partly refaced and unified in the 18th century.

The Sitting Room, looking south-east Fig 202



The Sitting Room panelling Fig 203

The first floor stair landing Fig 204

The stair to the second floor and Staff Room Fig 205

The Oriel Room Fig 206

The north wall window during conservation works, showing the wall fabric (CANT58GN) Fig 207

Detail of compass graffiti on the north window Fig 208

Detail of graffiti on the oriel window Fig 209

12 TOWER (Figs 210-231)

The Tower is a square-plan structure rising to a height of *c*14.6m. Although it is primarily stone-built, the south elevation and the upper parts of the tower on its north, east, and western sides, are faced with red brick which was later rendered. The tower was built in around the mid 16th century by John Dryden and is contemporary with the adjacent block containing the Dining and Tapestry Rooms. The house was subsequently extended northwards by the addition of the western range containing the Hall and Long Gallery, and later extended to the east.

While the tower presents substantial walls on three sides, the western wall, between the tower and adjacent block, comprises solid walling only in the cellar and on the raised upper levels, with the height between being filled with studwork interspersed with tie beams at the floor and ceiling levels. During conservation works it was noted that the tower demonstrated vertical bowing, with the south elevation having moved outwards at first floor level by 110mm, and with further distortion of the parapets (Bucknall and Melville 1980). These problems were stabilised during the works and decayed lintels and beams were treated or replaced. The relatively weak western wall also had structural problems due to the failure of one of the supporting beams at that side of the building.

The upper level of the tower has two rooms joined by a spiral stair or 'vice' which is also continued to the tower roof which serves as a viewing platform (Fig 230). The lower part of the tower is occupied by a substantial Jacobean style stair with landings at ground and first floor levels, and acts as the main circulation space in the south side of the house. This survey suggests that the current spiral stair did not continue lower than its present extent, instead a separate stair provided access between the lower rooms.

The height of the tower could potentially accommodate four rooms of the same dimensions as those surviving at the upper level, with each pair marked externally by the string courses.

12.1. Tower Stair

> As originally built this had a spiral stair in one corner, portions of which survive at the top of the house. The present stair dates from the 1630s. It has been partly rebuilt at ground-floor level, since it is clear from other evidence that when the ground floor rooms were formed 1708-1710, the floor level was dropped several inches. This probably results from the fact that before then it matched the level of the dais in the hall. Once that was removed it became necessary to match the reduced level in the wing. There is further adjustment at first-floor level with a landing lined by a detached section of balustrading. The stair has double baluster shapes and square newels with grenade caps (Bailey *et al* 2013).
>
> The large staircase…is so massive as to be a little coarse; but the few steps leading from the hall to the kitchen are protected by a good balustrade... The plan too is interesting as being the work of the earlier part of our period (Gotch 1894).

The stair occupies the greater part of the ground and first floor levels of the tower, leaving walkways along the south and west to allow access to the rooms at each side. The stair was surveyed by the architect Walter Talbot Brown in 1876 (who placed the date of the stair to between 1580 and 1590) and by Thomas Garratt in 1883 (D(CA)474 1882, DR/25/54/48) and this report will not go into detail in describing its design and appearance. The newel posts are square in plan with shallow recessed cusped panels to each face, reducing towards the crown and culminating in spiked grenade finials (Fig

216). The turned mirror balusters are typical of late 16th and early to mid-17th century work (Hall 2011). Comparisons have been drawn between the Great Stair and stairs of a similar layout and stylistic design at Kirby and Sywell, and also at Burton Latimer Hall (Heward and Taylor 1996, Gotch 1936). At ground level the sides of the stair down to the landing are covered by oak boards. The stair was formerly painted white and this scheme was removed in the 1960s in favour of the current dark brown colouration.

Beneath the ground floor landing, connecting the cellar and the ground floor levels is a short flight of stone steps that rises to the westernmost of two doorways located adjacent to the main stair (Figs 230, 231). As noted previously this stair is fitted between the north wall of the tower and the masonry pier that underlies the main stair. The stair is built onto a rubble core and the treads comprise masonry blocks which span the width between the wall and pier. There are three steps at the base of the stair which are part truncated by a relatively modern brick partition which bounds the poured concrete floor of the adjacent room. The stair is not aligned to ascend to its current landing and an awkward arrangement of short blocks has been put in place to allow access to the door (Fig 211). It is more probable that the stair originally joined to the east wall where a blocked external door in the side of the tower has been recorded. This space, now enclosed and identified as a former Wine Closet by Sir Henry (D(CA)472c Undated) was lit by a now blocked two-light, arched headed cavetto mullion window to the courtyard. This doorway was brought inside with the eastward expansion of the south range and was blocked with the creation of the enfilade across the rooms at this level.

The two blocks forming the third tread from the cellar landing have a diagonal line spanning across them, caused by a change in level in the stone face. This appears to be a deliberate feature, and *in situ* as the carved change in level is aligned across both blocks but it is stopped at the adjacent tread.

Across both doors, and supporting the first stair landing, is a bridging beam with defunct joist slots (Fig 212). The beam is oak, 350 x 250mm with chamfered upper edges. At its western end it is joined into the basal block of the middle newel post. The joist slots on the underside edge match those recorded in the south range cellars and formerly housed soffit tenons with diminished haunches. Joists for the stair landing are housed in this beam. The orientation of the defunct joist slots suggests that this beam has been installed upside down, indicating its re-use.

Despite the outward appearance of homogenous solidity, an examination of the ground floor under-stair supporting structure reveals an almost total scheme of recycled and re-used materials showing an array of defunct peg holes, mortice and joist slots (Figs 213-215, 231). The newel posts and studs behind the external panelling are supported on an L-plan frame of recycled oak beams which in turn is partly supported on the masonry pier in the cellar, partly embedded in the west wall and also carried over the crude stud partition recorded in the cellar. The ground floor landing is flush with the lowered Dining Room and Book Room floors and also the Hall where a dais was removed by Edward Dryden in 1710. These floors are also level with the 1710 doorway to the garden. It is held that the Great Stair was most likely built either by Erasmus Dryden or, in the 1630s by John 2nd Bt when he gave the Drawing Room a new plaster ceiling, replacing Erasmus' simpler barrel vault. It is generally held that Erasmus created the elaborate fireplace in the Drawing Room and the base of that feature is level with the current floor level, making the earlier date the more probable one.

The walkway platforms and landings of the stair are supported at the edges by timber beams carried in the tower walls and many of these have elaborate edge mouldings and decorative stops corresponding with the stair positions thereby confirming that these are contemporary with the current stair arrangement and not representative of an

earlier tower layout. The north to south bridging beam over the first floor landing partly supports the spiral stair turret and crosses the top of the spiral stair landing door. This beam has hollow, step, and ogee moulded chamfers on both sides and these terminate at elaborate decorative stops. It is likely that this beam replaced an earlier one when the stair was built; certainly the level of decorative embellishment is greater than that to be found on the beams over the Tapestry Room. A light-hook with decorative floret pattern base is fixed to the underside of the beam towards its southern end.

The first floor landing is an important spatial focal point and serves to connect several converging areas of the house, all of which are at varying vertical levels (Fig 217). The main part of the landing is flush with the current Drawing Room floor which was dropped in the late 16th century by Erasmus Dryden to serve a new chimney piece. This level steps up by three risers to the Tapestry Room, and a further three risers to the Long Gallery. A steeper and disconnected series of steps are required to rise to the spiral stair landing. Of interest is a chamfered post adjacent to the tapestry room which is strikingly similar to the octagonal newel post of the spiral stair and also those in the north stair adjacent to the Kitchen and Servants Hall. This post spans from the ceiling to the bottom of the door frame where is it is joined to a horizontal beam of which only a short length is exposed but likely spans the full width of the west wall. The beam is oak with a square section and a single joist mortice is visible on the side face, behind the short flight of balusters adjacent to the door. If this mortice is in situ it likely indicates the former floor level to the Tapestry Room prior to the dropping of the main landing to match the dropped Dining Room level. Previously in this report it has been suggested that the south facing window to the first floor stair landing has been dropped and a photograph taken during the conservation works shows vertical joins above the window lintel rising up to another beam embedded in the wall below the ceiling level and possibly joined to or abutting the bridging beam (CANT29GN). This would lift the window sill by *c*0.7m which would bring the window into a usable position for a floor at the level of the spiral stair landing and Long Gallery levels.

A circular-section chute is built into the eastern corner of the south wall (Fig 229) and connects to a garderobe built into the wall of the Landmark Trust Sitting Room, a feature described further in Section 12.3. A small hatch is built into the wall and allows a limited inspection of the chute, however a photograph taken during the restoration works provides an exposed view of the chute with the internal facing removed. The chute is lined in stone and deliberately accommodated in the coursing of the wall, rather than being an insertion. The photograph shows a bonding timber towards the top of the first floor wall which was truncated across the opened chute but the gap in stonework where it was held is clearly visible.

12.2. Spiral Stair

The spiral stair is entered from the first floor landing adjacent to and slightly above the entrance to the Long Gallery (Fig 231). The door is a fairly plain 18th-century four-panel whose frame rises to the underside of the elaborately carved bridging beam that spans the width of the tower. To avoid a jarring visual break between the main stair and the smaller spiral turret a false panelled angle has been added from the base of the stair turret to the ceiling to provide an illusion of the continuation of the main stair.

Unlike the upper parts of the turret where the tower walls have been given rounded recesses to accommodate the circular plan, the landing has square walls which suggest that the current landing served as such since its initial creation. It is possible that former rounded recesses were filled in, and at the lower levels this would be necessary for the visual integrity of the later stair, however inside the turret landing it would be an unnecessary effort and the landing window does not appear to have been altered.

The round stair turret includes an oak spiral staircase with solid 'treads' made from oak beams sawn from corner to corner diagonally and tenoned into an octagonal oak newel post (Figs 218, 230). The bottom lower corners of the solid treads had also been roughly hewn back so as to provided more headroom in the confined stair turret. The top section of the stair newel post was joined with a bridled scarf to the lower. The upper section is less worn and patinated suggesting that it had been replaced in the 18th to 19th centuries.

At the top of the cylindrical turret a round wall plate frame of pit sawn oak survives. It is made of six sections of thick sawn oak plank joined with edge halved scarfs secured with two oak face pegs. The curves of the edges of the plates had been hewn out. Similar frames are often found in brick or stone lined wells of late medieval to 17th century date. The rafters were relatively recent replacements (Fig 219).

At the landing is a small rectangular window with diamond pattern glazing and a single saddle bar. It has a timber lintel and wooden sill and is set in a widely splayed reveal to allow maximum light. Several windows are located at intervals up the stair and these are single light arch headed windows with spandrels, set in irregular splays respecting the curve of the turret. One of these windows which looks into the roof space over the Drawing Room has been given a wooden hatch. The window splay is formed of coursed shaped rubble and quoins are positioned at the window opening. The timber lintel has three rectangular notches on the underside edge and corresponding mortices are cut into the wooden sill. Taken individually these might indicate re-use of timbers however their alignment suggests that these are in-situ. It is possible that following the construction of the adjacent range which blocked this window, three vertical studs were put into the window edge to serve as a frame for a lath and plaster blocking of the window.

12.3. Landmark flat – Sitting Room

The consolidation of the tower rooms in 1982-3 was among the first structural repairs to be carried out at Canons Ashby (Haslam 1985). During the works it became apparent that the 1710 alterations had had a significant impact on the structural integrity of the tower, causing serious subsidence in the south-west corner and weakening the wall between the Sitting Room and Kitchen. Steel joists were inserted in the length of wall running under the Kitchen door and steel brackets inserted into the tie beams of the Tapestry Room ceiling below the Kitchen floor (Haslam 1985).

The two rooms occupying the upper levels of the tower provide an indication of the dimensions and layout of the rooms which formerly occupied its lower levels. The rooms are unassuming, with low ceilings and little by way of decorative embellishment.

The first room, now serving as a Sitting Room, opens into the attic space over the Tapestry Room which has latterly been converted into a Kitchen and adjoining WC. The north-east corner of the room is occupied by the rounded stair turret through which the room is entered. The door to the room is a simple four-panel, likely 19th century, set in a lightly moulded frame, and with a simple iron rim lock with brass knob. The door is swung on 18th-century L-hinges and a *Briton* door closer is installed at the top of the door. The wall adjacent to the door is recessed slightly to accommodate the door when opened.

The walls and ceiling are plastered and painted a pale cream / white colour and simple black painted skirting is installed at the bottom of the walls (Fig 223). The ceiling was rebuilt during restoration works and the room was given a new floor of elm boards.

Centrally to the room is a north-south bridging beam painted white. The beam has a deeply chamfered edge and hollow to straight stops, indicative of a 16th-century date. Towards the north end of the beam is an iron strap which wraps around the east face

and is bolted to the underside. A perpendicular beam adjoins the east side of the bridging beam and crosses to the eastern wall, partly obscured by the curve of the stair turret. An axial beam spans across the top of the western wall at ceiling level and also has hollow or ogee stops.

The south facing three-light window has splayed reveals and the embrasure has a lightly moulded wooden surround. The window has a pair of folding shutters, each leaf with beaded stiles and chamfer fielded panels. The shutters have simple 18th-century H-hinges and modern brass knobs and can be secured by an iron shutter bar.

In the south-west corner of the room the junction of the south and east walls is awkwardly cut back to allow for the installation of a small square wooden hatch that provides access to the southern parapet walkway over the Tapestry Room roof (Fig 221). The hatch is secured by sliding bolts but these could not be opened during this survey.

The south-east corner of the room is recessed to accommodate a small square alcove and a larger doorway (Fig 227). The alcove is set *c*1m from the ground, measures *c*0.6m x 0.5m, and has a flat sill and splayed edges and head. This was likely a former window but no evidence for it is visible externally and no fittings relating to its function as a window remain. The doorway sill is set 0.5m from the floor and the opening measures *c*1.2m in height x 0.6m wide. The casing is formed of sawn oak posts, tenoned and pegged. The lintel displays hack marks and was likely formerly plastered over. The door is swung on simple L-plan hinges and a 17th or 18th-century-style iron latch. It has been noted that during the 1980s restoration works the tower doors were lifted, repaired, and re-hung and new latches copying the originals were added. A specific list of such work was not sourced during this survey. The original oak sill is covered by modern planks cut to fit the space and with a central cut away and lid which can be removed to reveal a latrine or privy seat carved into the sill timber (Fig 228).

The medieval term garderobe may be conflated with the French term garderobe which referred to an important storage chamber for expensive clothing and valuables, as well as a space for dress making, often with a fireplace, that also acted as a finance room in which accounting and business could take place (Wood 1981). The term garderobe in the context of privy was in use from the 14th century and many references to privies may be found in the Liberate Rolls. Privies were often found in conjunction with a chamber with a chimney and were sometimes located externally to the wall and supported on corbels. Privies were provided with a small window or some other form of ventilation such as slits, with the sill acting as a shelf on which to place a candle. It is uncertain how the privy would be discharged, whether a pot would be placed in an alcove under the seat, or if a channel is built into the wall. As noted in Section 12.1, a chute or channel is built into the east corner of the tower's south wall and in order to connect to the garderobe the chute would need to turn a corner between the east and south walls. It has been suggested that the chute collects rainwater from concealed gutters on the tower and thus maintained a rudimentary cleaning system (Haslam 1985). In the wall behind the privy is a square wooden hatch which provides access to the parapet walkway along the south side of the Drawing Room roof.

The 16th-century fireplace has a moulded stone surround and four-centred arched opening (Fig 224). The lower parts of the surround are chamfered and a pair of simple compass designs is picked out from the stone in raised carving (Fig 225). Above the compasses are carved stops, wider variants of the pumpkin stop, and the arch moulding springs a short distance above the stops. The arch moulding is in the form of hollow, ogee, step and hollow, and has recessed spandrels at the corners. A narrow stone hearth bounded with modern wood edging is set at the fire opening. Within the fireplace is a cast iron grate, likely 18th century, with column, vase, and floral motifs set within beaded cartouches. The sides of the grate are rounded inwards and joined by

firebars. The back and sides of the firebox are of brick. The south edge of the fireplace marks the extent of a subtle raising of the wall surface which with a vertical edge is recessed from this point. It is possible that the privy may have been enclosed from the room, hence why it required its own small window, and the line to the side of the fireplace may mark the edge of the former partition.

12.4. Landmark Flat – Kitchen and WC

The Kitchen occupies the larger part of the attic space above the Tapestry Room, with the western end of the space enclosed to form a small WC and bathroom. The partition between the kitchen and WC predates the 1980s works and likely dates to the 18th century. The sides of the two rooms were squared up by the addition of stud partitions and a new dormer window was added in the north-east corner of the kitchen. The dormer is the only direct source of natural light to the kitchen and allows access to the parapet walkways over the west elevation.

During restoration works the remains of painted plasterwork were uncovered to the south side of the kitchen door, on the west face of the wall (Haslam 1985).

Two trusses are partly visible in the kitchen, the lower ends being hidden within the modern crawlspaces at the sides of the room, and the apexes hidden by the ceiling. These are described in Section 13.4.

The door between the sitting room and kitchen appears to have been put together from re-used panelling. The material is cleft oak of mixed origins, some faster grown and some slower, and resembles in form the panelling of the Servants Hall, though the panel dimensions are not the same. The rails and stiles are tenoned and double pegged and the top and side edges have simple ovolo moulding with chamfered mouldings to the bottom edges, and with runout moulding at the edges of the outer stiles. The northern panel has been truncated to fit the door width and the stile brought inward. The inner face of the door comprises planks. The door is swung on L-hinges, riveted and with screws, and the lower hinge has been bent to match the shape of the profile of the panelling. The sitting room facing architrave appears to be 18th century and hides an earlier oak casing that rises from an oak sill. The eastern edges of the casing are chamfered with notched straight cut stops *c*0.5m from the floor. The lintel is similarly chamfered.

Stepping out from the Landmark Flat Kitchen and onto the guttering over the north side of the Tapestry Room roof, a blocked window to the tower can be seen and this is partly truncated by the level of the later guttering (Fig 222). The window has ironstone jambs whose inner edges have rough square profile moulding, and a timber lintel with a matching cutaway to the underside edge. The window has been blocked with stone rubble set in thick lime mortar. Over the top of the window is a projecting span of lead flashing and the lowest part of the wall is covered with lead sheets down to the gutter. This window matches another on the opposing side of the same roof which has been re-used as an access hatch.

12.5. Landmark Flat – Bedroom

The top floor of the tower comprises a roughly square plan room with the round stair turret in its north-east corner. The walls are plainly plastered and painted and the room was given a new floor and ceiling during conservation works. The underside of a north-south central bridging beam spans the centre of the room. The beam has unworked edges and is without stops. Three stone corbels are located at the junction of the west wall and ceiling.

The door to the room is formed of three planks with chamfer edged pit sawn battens on the inside face, and applied moulded panel rails and fillets to the stairway (Fig 232). The door is cut awkwardly to the slightly angled door head and the top panelled rail is

cut at an angle to fit. The door is swung on tapered strap hinges with spearhead ends, and it has a wooden latch and a rimlock with wooden lock case. The wall adjacent to the doorway is recessed to accommodate the door when opened.

An area of scratched graffiti was exposed on the stair turret wall during conservation works and was left visible behind a protective plastic sheet which was briefly removed during this survey to allow for photography (Fig 226). The graffiti, which is roughly executed in a childlike manner depicts a number of female faces in profile as well as other smaller, less decipherable designs. The name Philippa Dryden is underlined and a small date of 1775 is also provided. Philippa Dryden was the sister of Elizabeth Dryden, wife of Sir John Turner Dryden, and was born *c*1757 and moved to Canons Ashby *c*1775.

A small brick fireplace is built into the corner of the room where the stair turret joins the east wall. The fire opening is quite narrow and low and has an iron frame and a decorative sunburst pattern grate. The grate is raised above the floor surface and the floor boards are continued into the splayed fire recess.

12.6. Tower platform

The spiral stair rises onto the tower roof within a projecting stone turret (Figs 220, 230). The stonework is comprised of roughly shaped rubble in irregular courses that rise in height around the eastern side of the turret where it meets the adjoining brick chimney. Large ironstone quoins are placed at the sides of the door opening which is spanned by an ironstone lintel. The turret is roofed with a decorative lead crown and finial, atop which is a decorative weather vane. The weather vane was repaired in July 1888 and Henry Dryden took the opportunity to produce an annotated drawing of it in which he provided details of its form and dimensions (D(CA)474 1888).

The tower parapet is *c*1m in height and is crowned with two courses of moulded coping stones. The external render is continued onto the inner side of the parapet. The base string course projects the parapet faces slightly out from the main wall faces. At its north-west corner the parapet displays an odd misalignment which results in a marked vertical line in both the outer and inner sides of the wall and this spans from the basal string course and includes the coping. This distortion of the parapet is related to differential settlement and subsidence in the south-west corner of the building.

The tower platform is covered by overlapping lead sheets with a slight ridge to the centre to allow drainage. The edges of the platform form a lowered gutter which it has been noted gather rainwater and channel water to the Landmark flat privy.

A two-part brick chimney comprising adjoining flues is located at the join of the stair turret and the parapet wall. The innermost of the two flues is the earlier and the brickwork of the later flue is carried over the top of the earlier to provide a level and consistent chimney crown. The smaller, earlier flue connects to the Landmark Trust Bedroom and the later flue connects to the Sitting Room.

Tie beam with carved door head over the stair entrance Fig 210

The stone stair in the cellar Fig 211

The underside of the stair landing; note defunct joist slots on beam over door
Fig 212

The underside of the stair at the ground floor landing Fig 213

The ground floor landing, looking north Fig 214

Re-used bridging beam with empty mortices Fig 215

The ground floor stair landing Fig 216

The first floor landing with doors to the Long Gallery and the spiral stair Fig 217

The spiral stair Fig 218

The underside of the tower roof Fig 219

The tower platform showing the stair turret, looking north Fig 220

The eastern elevation of the tower with hatch access from the Sitting Room Fig 221

Blocked window in the west elevation of the tower adjacent to the end gable of the west range Fig 222

The Landmark Sitting Room, looking south-east Fig 223

Fireplace in the Landmark Trust Sitting Room Fig 224

Detail of compass on fireplace jamb Fig 225

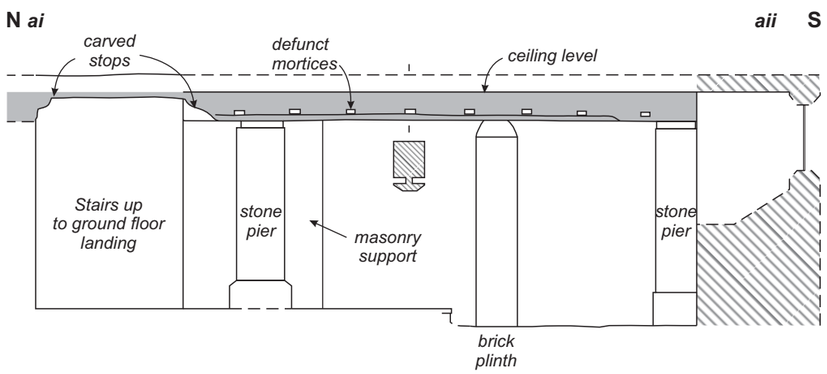
The stairwell in the Landmark Bedroom Fig 226

Hatch to the parapet / garderobe, with adjacent niche or blocked window, Landmark Sitting Room Fig 227

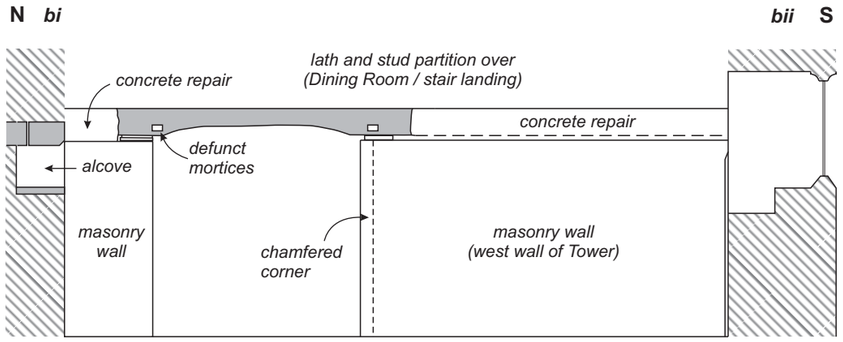
Garderobe seat in the Sitting Room Fig 228

The garderobe channel exposed in the first floor wall during restoration works (CANT34BLK) Fig 229

Elevation 1 *(see Fig 231)*



Elevation 2 *(see Fig 231)*



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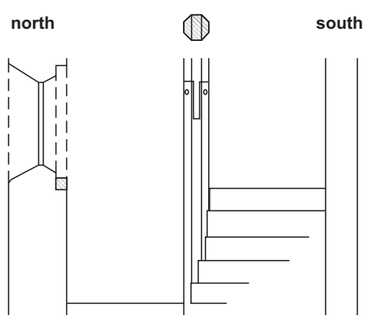
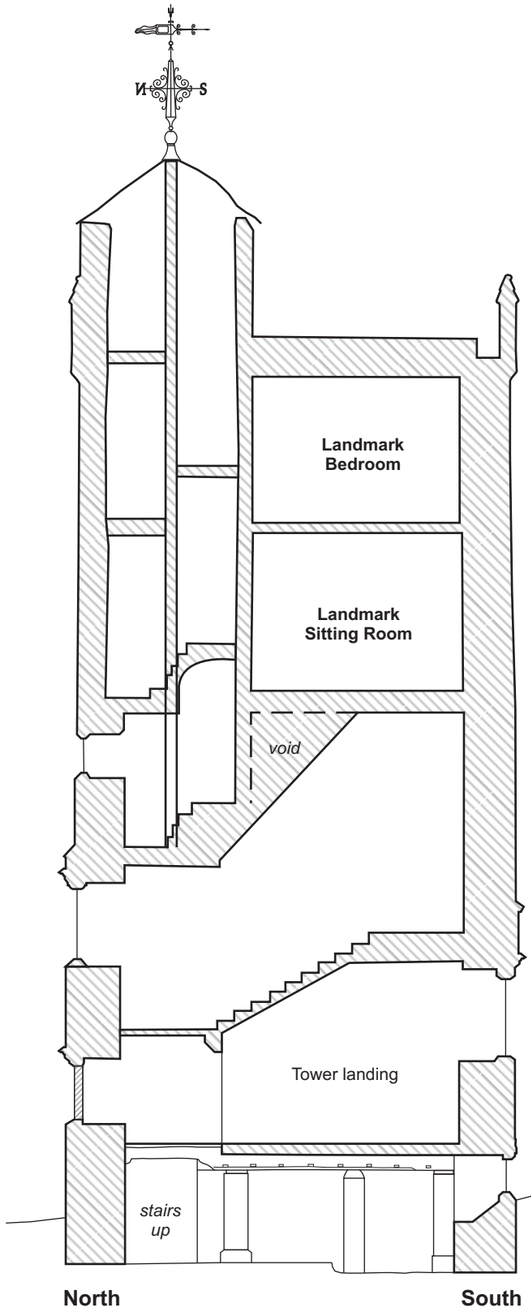
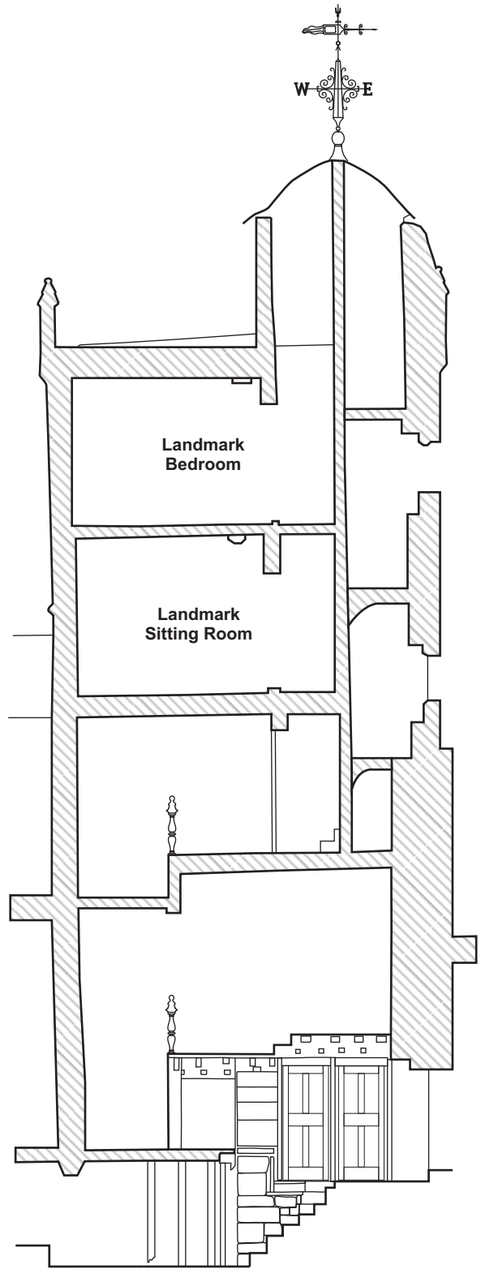


Section of vice stair and detail of newel post

0 2m



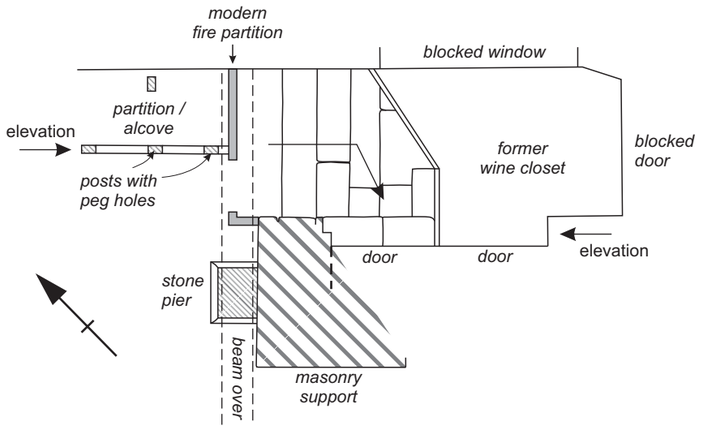


0 5m

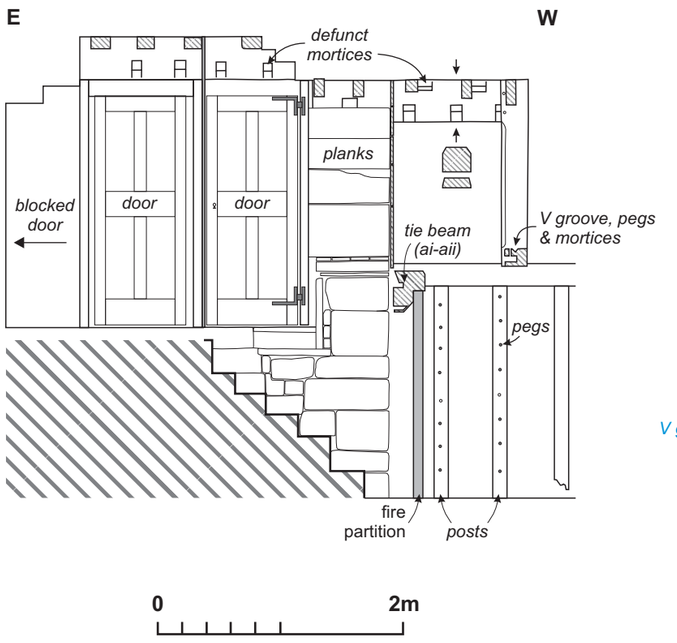
Scales 1:100 and 1:50 (A3)

Sections of the Tower and detail of the cellar tie beam and supports Fig 230

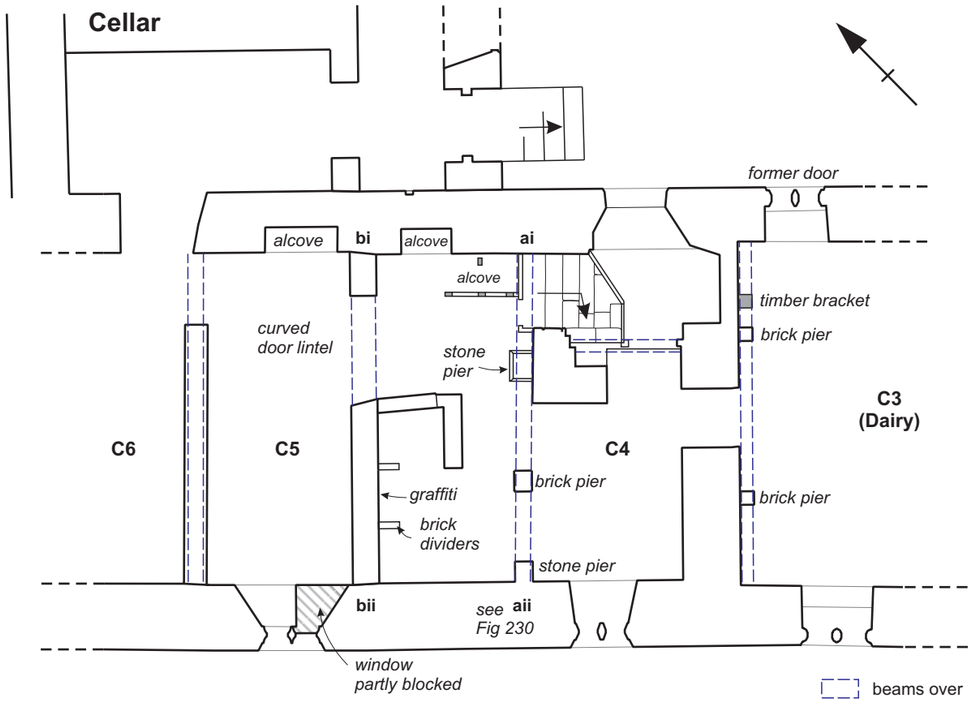
Plan of cellar stair



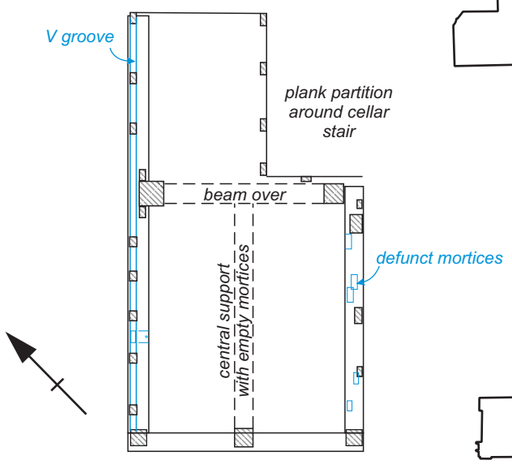
Elevation



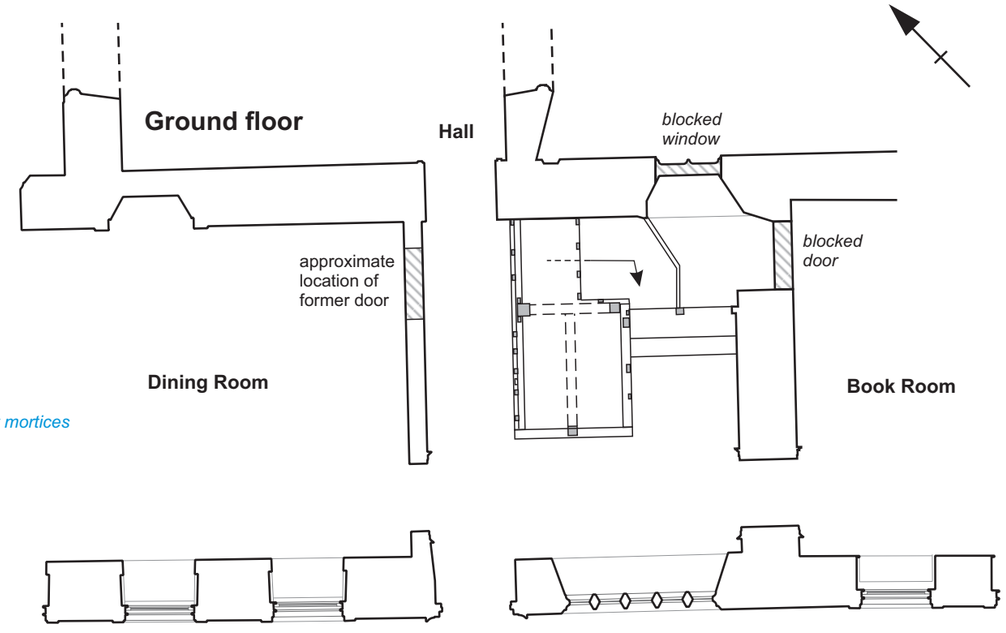
Cellar



Under-stair plan

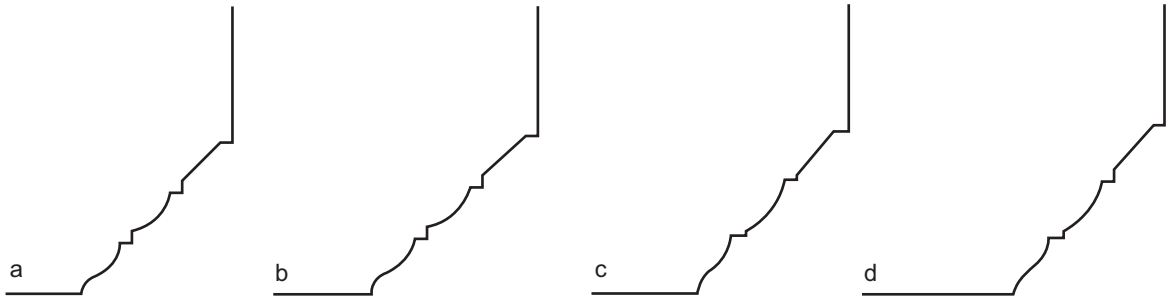


Ground floor



Scales 1:100 and 1:50 (A3)

Plan of the Tower cellar, with detail of the stair Fig 231



a - Great Hall - Fireplace

b - Great Hall - Blocked Door

c - Great Hall - East Door

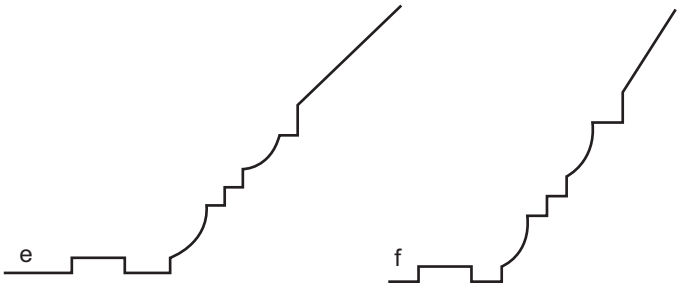
d - Great Hall - West Door

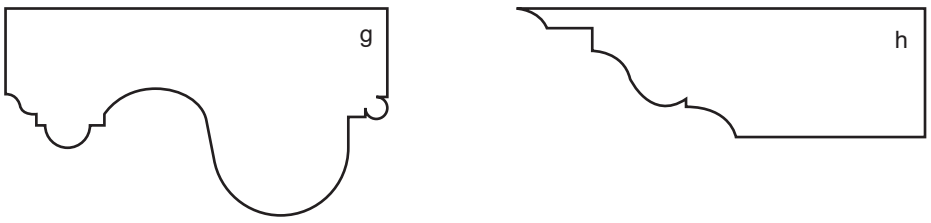
e - Winter Parlour Fireplace

f - Sitting Room fireplace

g - Book Room fireplace

h - Landmark Trust Sitting Room fireplace





i - Kitchen, door to east corridor

j - Kitchen, door to recessed cupboard

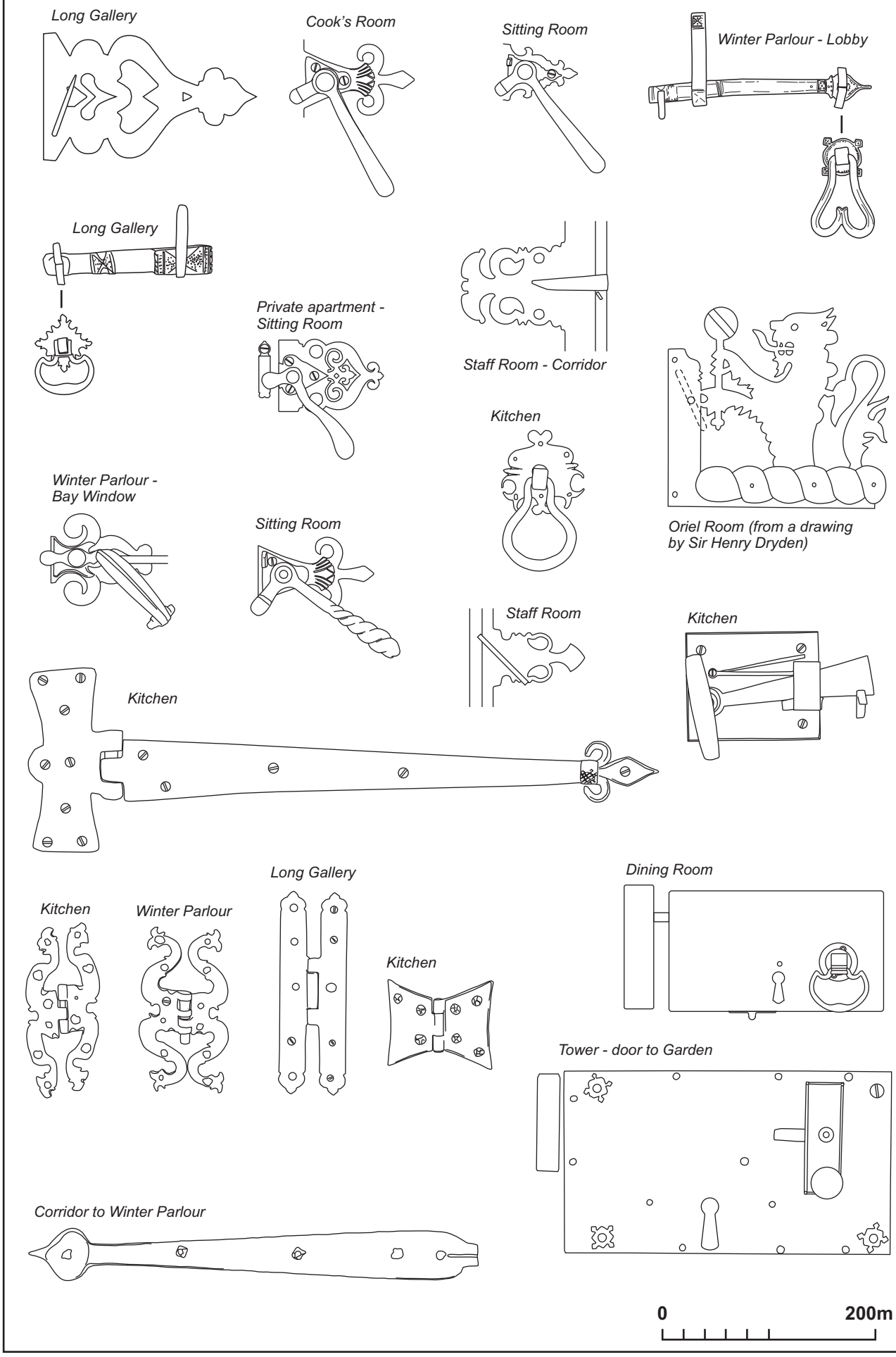
k - Cook's Room door

l - Landmark Trust, Kitchen door

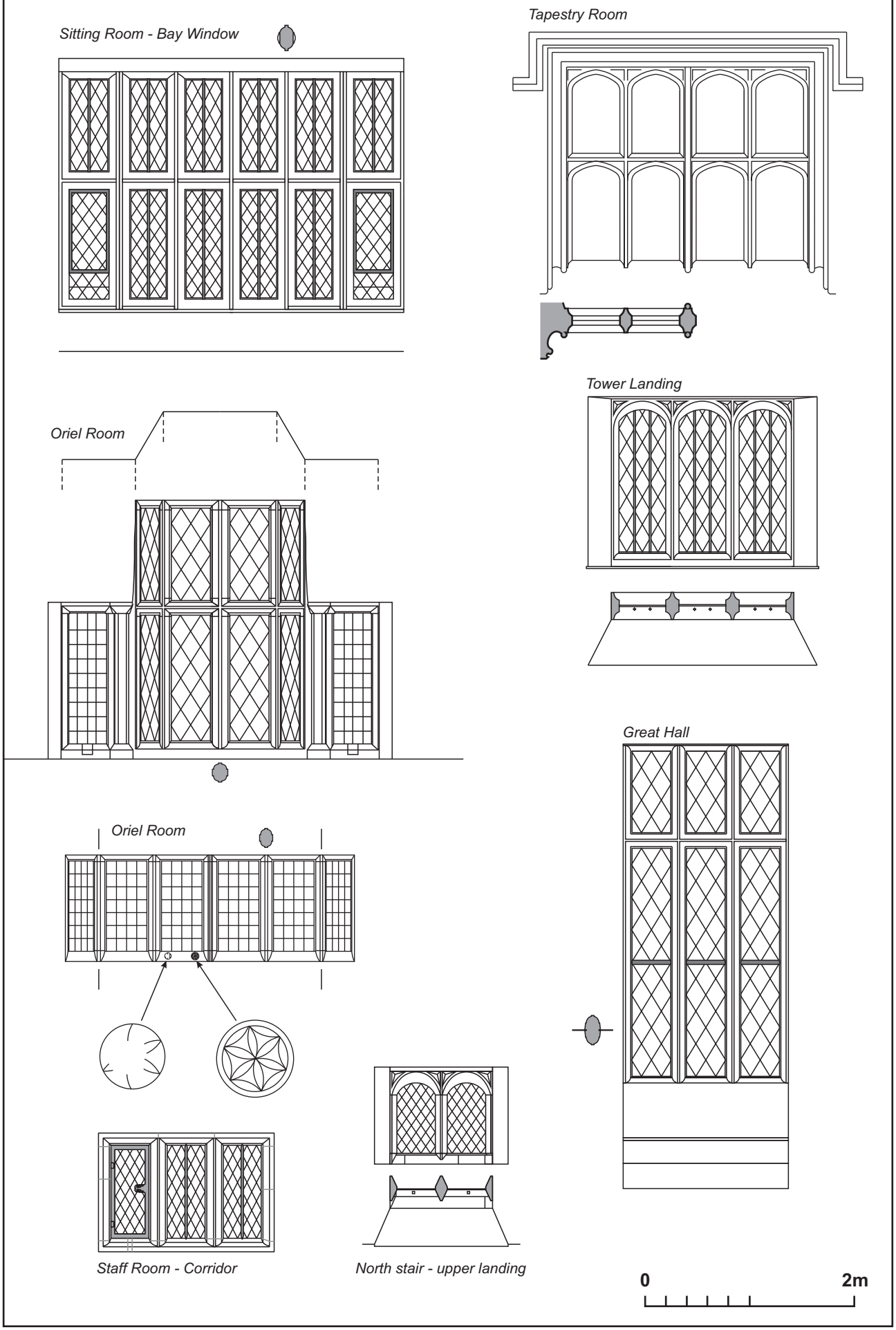
m - Landmark Trust, Bedroom door

Scale 1:5

Details of door, fireplace, and panelling mouldings Fig 232



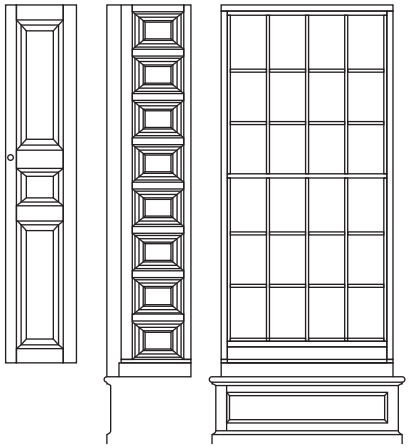
Scale 1:5 Examples of door and window furniture Fig 233



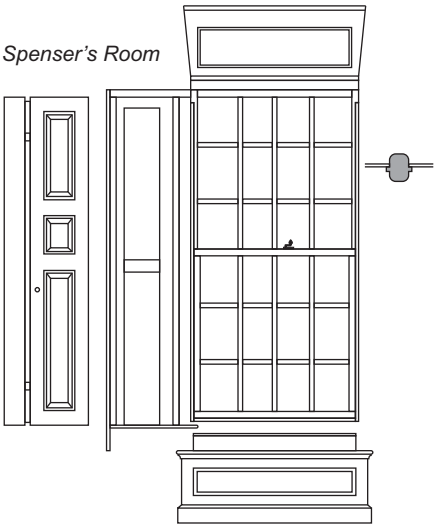
Scale 1:50 (A4)

Examples of mullion windows Fig 234

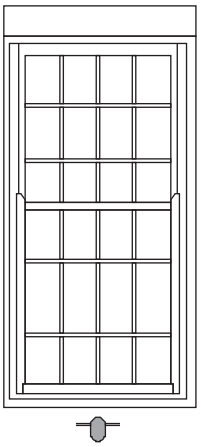
Book Room



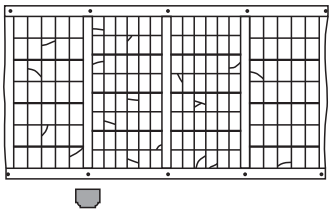
Spenser's Room



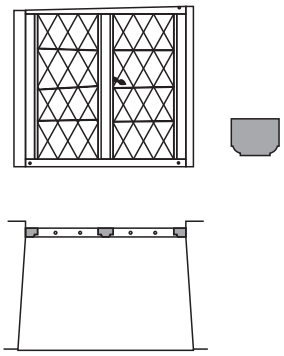
Private apartment - WC



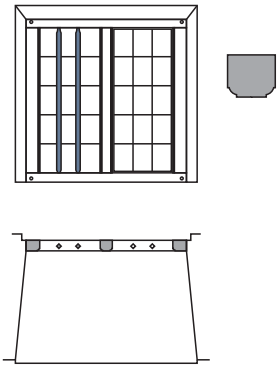
East Range - Corridor



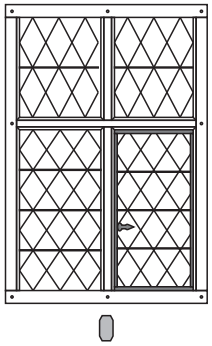
Long Gallery



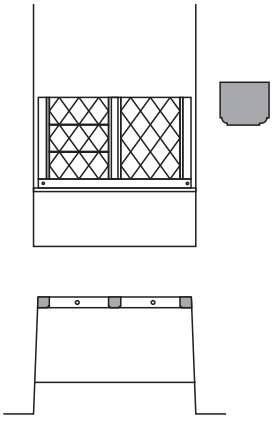
Long Gallery



North Range -
first floor corridor



Apartment -
second floor corridor



0 2m

Scale 1:50 (A4) Examples of wood-frame and sash windows Fig 235

13 THE ROOFS (Fig 283)

13.1. East range (Figs 236-246)

The east range roof is carried over six trusses, labelled E1-E6 from south to north (Fig 283). The roof space is accessible from hatches in the house office ceiling and the Dryden flat kitchen and the space is partly divided by the central stone chimney. At its south end the roof space is decreased by *c*0.6m due to the raised height of the southern office. The roof is bounded to the south by the stone gable wall to Spenser's Room, and to the north by a stud partition to the Oriel Room.

Truss E1 is partly embedded in the south gable wall at the back of Spenser's Room (Fig 236). Although only the upper part of the truss is visible, comparison with the adjacent truss E2 suggests that it likely also has a raised cruck form. The blades are joined by a tenoned straight collar and there are two purlins tenoned into the blades, just below the collar. There are no mortices on the blades for higher level purlins. A number of iron bolts are installed in the inside face of the eastern purlin but could not be closely examined.

The house office is in two parts, the southern part being raised higher than the other and accessed via a short flight of steps. The ceiling has a light frame with pit-sawn rafters suspended by iron hangers from a pair of longitudinal beams. The upper part of the north wall of the office is visible adjacent to the collar of truss E2. The materials and quality of the work suggests a date range of late 17th to early 19th centuries.

The common rafters are joined at a plank ridge piece and descend to the wall plate. The eastern dormer window overlaps the roof pitch and a number of planks are laid between the rafters and the roof tiles, with small packing pieces to make it level. Several of the rafters pairs are joined by light nailed collars.

Truss E2 provides the only view of the lower parts of the principal rafter trusses (also described as raised crucks) that characterise the east range roof structure (Fig 245). The lower part of the eastern blade, including its join to the tie beam, is exposed in the house office within the doorway which steps down to the privy block (Fig 237). The truss would originally have been embedded in the wall but was exposed when the doorway was inserted.

The cruck blade is of oak made from a curved baulk hewn to a rectangular section up to 350mm wide and then sawn in half with a final thickness of 125mm. Broad axe marks were found on the original surface of the timber but its lower end had been crudely hacked back at a later date for a new east-west doorway. The timber would originally have been part of a matched pair set on the same oak tie beam whose underside is visible in the Brewhouse ceiling.

The tie beam is a squared boxed heart oak timber. The terminus of the tie beam has been truncated to make it level with the end of the blade, thus exposing the cruck tenon which is fitted into a double pegged mortice. The joint area had largely decayed away but its form was still visible. The underside of the tie beam is exposed in the Brewhouse ceiling where it has unusual raised and tapered stops.

A small north-south oak timber is nailed with an iron peg to the outside of the cruck blade and might formerly have served as a longitudinal wall-plate like timber added at a later date to the original construction. One of the inside corners of the cruck blade is waney and may present a suitable core sample for tree ring analysis; however the presence of several areas of epicormic growth may interfere with the growth pattern. The parent tree was likely to have been a hedgerow tree or one growing in open woodland where curved spreading forms can develop, rather than in a dense wood. The lower part of the matching blade is not visible and it is unclear if it was truncated to create the doorway between the office and the adjacent stair turret.

The upper part of this truss, visible in the roof space, sees the boxed halved cruck blades continued to the roof apex where they are lapped and pegged (Fig 238). The depth of the cruck blades as they rise through the ceiling is reduced upwards towards a substantial tenoned-in collar, at which point they are widened, and continue their upward taper to the apex. Three original purlins are tenoned into the north face of the truss with a repair on the west side involving a repositioned purlin utilising an iron forelock bolt with wooden packing pieces (Fig 239). The purlin to blade joints recorded here differ to those used in the trusses on the northern side of the same roof where the purlin ends simply lap each other on the outer sides of the trusses.

The underside of the collar retains traces of lath and plaster suggesting that ceiling level was formerly higher, matching the raised ceiling of the southern part of the office.

Truss E3 is also aligned with one of the tie beams visible in the brewhouse ceiling and the tenoned joint between truss blade and tie beam is clearly exposed in the courtyard wall. Only the upper part of the truss is visible in the roof space and the blades are heavy principal rafters or raised crucks with a slight inward bend (Fig 246). The blades do not show any curve towards the feet and in order to connect to the tie beam will need to descend fairly sharply towards the eaves. Unfortunately due to limited access in the roof as well as insulation material, pipes and cables, it was not possible to view the lower parts of the truss. Unlike Trusses E1 and E2, the truss at E3 is without a collar. There are four lines of purlins and all have been repositioned or packed out with furring pieces. At the lower east side the outer edge of the blade is notched to accommodate a purlin to which an additional furring piece was added. The upper purlin on the same blade is held on a shaped chock fastened to the outer edge of the blade. At the lower west side, the purlin is tenoned into the blade and an additional furring piece is held at the back of the blade. The two are joined by bolted straps added during the 1980s restoration works. The upper western purlin is held at the back of the blades and supported by a chock or cleat, with an additional thin packing piece held between the purlin and common rafter. At the apex the west blade is tenoned and pegged into the eastern blade. An oak branch footing, waney on one face is nailed to the truss apex and supports a plank on edge ridge piece of later 18th to 19th-century type.

Roughly central to the east range is the masonry chimney which serves the large fireplace in the former Brewhouse. The stack is incrementally stepped inwards from the east and projects from the roof as a double flue stone-built chimney straddling the ridge, each flue crowned with a clay pot. Early photographs of the house show only a single tall pot. Adjacent to the chimney there was formerly a wooden louvered lantern.

The chimney is set directly adjacent to Truss E4 the upper section of which is visible in the attic, and part of the lower level is exposed behind the wall at the back of the first floor utility room (Figs 240, 241). The uneven ceiling joists and profusion of pipework at the north side of the roof restricted the placement of the scaffold boards and access was restricted to the central strip of the roof space with little access to the edges. Truss E4 is composed of heavy oak principal rafters which descend in a straight line to the timber wall plate. At the apex the western blade is tennoned into the side of the eastern. A heavy and slightly curved collar is joined into the truss at mid-attic height and a second collar is joined above the wall plate. The underside of the upper truss has a number of regularly spaced mortices with truncated tenons remaining in situ and indicates a former partition. Three purlins are tenoned into the north face of the truss and a fourth appears to be a later addition to the eastern blade, likely added as part of wider alterations to the roof. A purlin was formerly tenoned adjacent to the upper collar and the end of the purlin at the south side of the beam protrudes through the slot. The lower collar is embedded in a brick partition wall which was built to enclose the first floor kitchen. The oak collar is tenoned into the sides of the truss and a single candle taper burn is located at the join to the eastern blade. The brickwork below the collar appears to be 17th or 18th century in date while that above the collar may be a little

later. The addition of the brickwork would have required the removal of the former partition between the two collars.

Truss E5 has a similar form to Truss E3 and comprises straight heavy oak principal rafters or raised cruck blades (Figs 242, 246). At the apex the eastern blade is diagonally tenoned into the side of its pair. A pit sawn oak plank has been nailed to the south face of the apex to support a plank on edge ridge piece, likely later 18th or 19th century in date. A limited view of the lower western side of the beam suggests that the foot of the western blade has a curving heel. The blade also tapers in depth towards the apex. The outer edges of the principal rafters are notched to support the purlins which are carried on the backs of the blades rather than being tenoned into them. The purlins have been doubled and tripled up and packed out to raise the roof slopes. A number of the common rafters are pegged to the purlins. A light collar type timber has been laid across the lower parts of the principals and iron fastened to them; this is probably not an original feature.

Truss E6 is the northernmost truss of the east wing and is set immediately adjacent to the exposed stud partition to the Oriel Room (Fig 243). The truss comprises straight heavy principal rafters with the purlins lapped over them, two on the west side and one on the east. At the apex the eastern blade is tenoned and pegged into the western. The principal rafters are notched to accommodate the purlins; the eastern purlin has been lifted out from the lap joint by a packing piece. A light collar is tenoned into the blades. The sawn faces of the boxed halved purlins throughout the east range roof were generally set facing out to provide a flat, heartwood face for the common rafters to rest on.

All the principle original timbers used in the east range roof are of oak, converted by hewing with axes first into baulks and then subdivided by pit sawing. The principal rafters / cruck blades were ‘box halved’ sections having a hewn face and two hewn edges, and one sawn face. Some of the smaller collar timbers and common rafters were pit-sawn from sawn slabs. These raw materials and conversion methods are typical of the 16th to early 18th century periods. The use of iron forelock bolts, and bolted members becomes more common in the late 17th and 18th centuries but has occasionally found as early as the 1580s in London carpentry.

Compared to the heavy oak roof structure of the east range, the construction of the first floor ceilings, particularly at the northern end of the range, provides a contrast in materials and workmanship. The ceiling had light, pit sawn joists of what appeared to be elm that had suffered some woodworm damage. These ceiling joists were supported by a crudely hewn longitudinal beam of what appears to be of ash with bark still on. Small scrap timber hangers were nailed to it and the ceiling joists below. The ceiling laths for the plaster were of cleft oak. This work looked like ‘cheap work’ of the late 17th to early 19th centuries.

The overall roof form is irregular and has clearly been substantially repaired and re-contoured and the tiled surface is uneven and undulating. The roof ridge had been raised from the truss apexes to the north of the chimney, and was not quite straight in plan on the N-S axis. There had clearly also been some sagging and shifting of the roof line shown in the doubling up or ‘furring’ out of sagging rafters, and also some of the purlins, on both the east and west sides. The east elevation shows a clear rise in the eaves line immediately to the north of the chimney and coincident with the window to the kitchen. This rise of two or three courses necessitated the raising of the ends of the common rafters. The west elevation does not have the same central rise as the east wall, but instead the eaves / wall plate line has a gradual southward rise of six or seven visible courses from Truss E3.

It is generally held that the east range pre-dates the ranges to the north and south and forms part of Wylkyns Farm. However neither end of the range provides a satisfactory

terminus, with the distal trusses simply abutting against the later ranges. This is particularly evident at the join to the north range where the attic space is sealed by the exposed stud partition wall forming the Oriel Room. The east range is two storied and the north range has three stories, with the Oriel Room at second floor level, though partly contained in the roof space. The timberwork at the partition wall and truss provides a multi-phased arrangement which is complicated by an unknown number of repairs and alterations to the roof, as well as repairs undertaken during the 1980s. The bridging beam supporting the Oriel Room floor projects a little way into the east range attic space and the southernmost pair of joists are visible underneath the stud partition (Fig 244). The beam is a boxed heart oak and the exposed end of the beam is cut to leave a wide shelf or ledge at the bottom end. An RSJ has been inserted into the roof space and a bracket suspended from the beam provides support to the bridging beam. It is unclear how this element was supported prior to the modern arrangement. The joists are deep and plank-like in section and appear to join to the beam by double tenons. The bridging beams in the southern cellar rooms present paired mortices however these appear to relate to floor joists overlying ceiling battens and while the possibility of these being double tenons was considered, it was thought unlikely due to the gap between the two slots. A defunct bridging beam over the Spenser's Room ceiling (Section 9.1) appears to show evidence of formerly housing deep plank-like joists with double tenons, and some may remain in situ. The use of double tenons with diminished haunches has been noted at Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge, or 'The Great Standing' at Chingford, Essex (*c*1542), and on the ground floor of the Great Hall at the Middle Temple (1561) and such slots used joists of deep section (Hewett 1997, 282). It is unclear as to what extent this jointing form was used in Northamptonshire and in what periods.

A post is joined to the top of the beam and rises to join the underside of a horizontal rail which when viewed from within the Oriel Room has a moulded edge and carries the southern blade of the double-arched truss. A concrete beam has been added adjacent over the post to supplement the moulded rail. Joined to the each side of the post at its base are a pair of rails that carry the wall studs.

At the northern end, the east range roof line partly overlaps the slope of the northern roof. As has been noted, although the north range is stone-built, with brick facing to the north, the walling is not continued across first and second floor levels where it crosses the east range. At the western side of the east range roof slope the gap in walling is sealed by the continuation of the stud partition which is externally visible as a triangle of render. To the east of the slope the gap is sealed by a triangular patch of brickwork which is supported over the distal common rafter. A similar method was used to seal the gaps between the roof slope and projecting gable and chimney stack between the east and south ranges.

The join between the east and south ranges, Truss E1 Fig 236

The exposed cruck base with join to the tie beam Fig 237

The upper part of the raised cruck, Truss E2 Fig 238

Detail of forelock bolt Fig 239

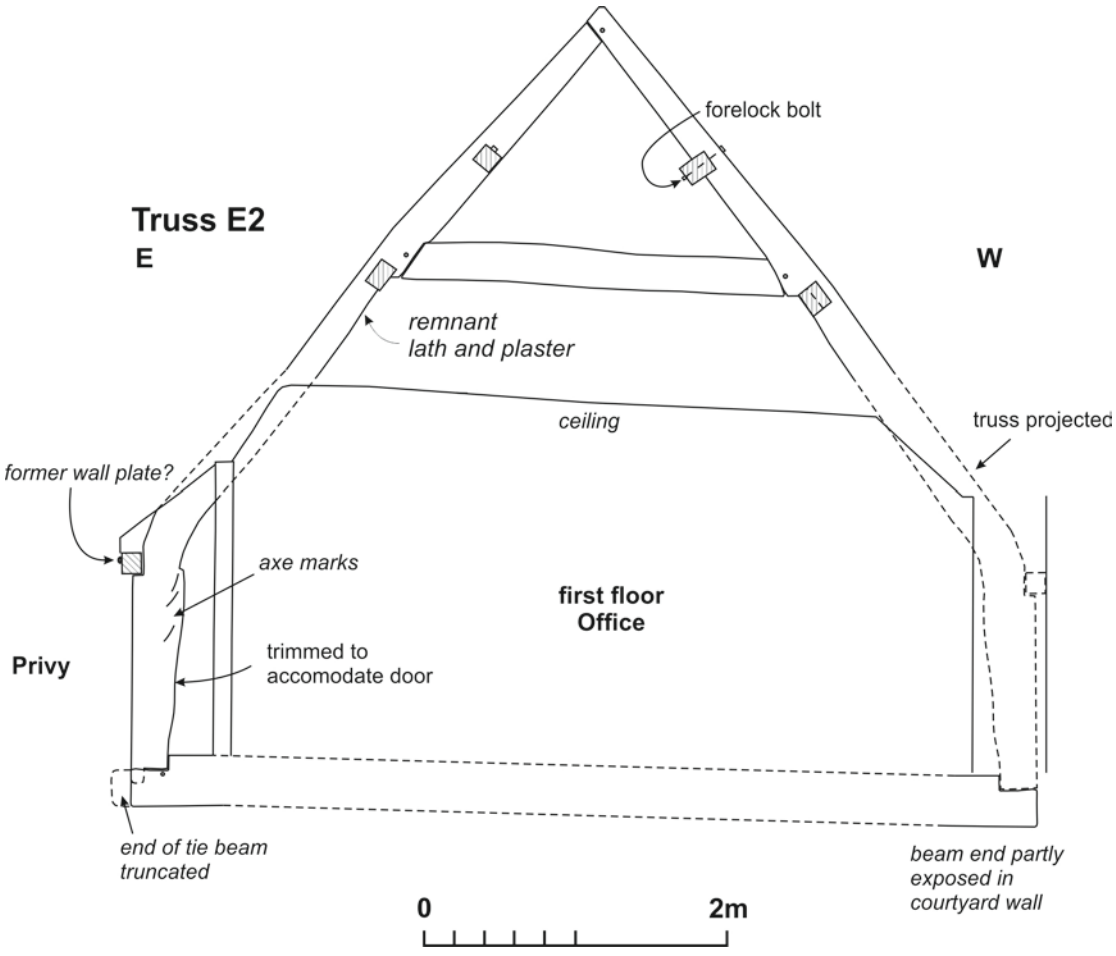
The upper part of Truss E4 Fig 240

The lower part of Truss E4; note defunct mortices on collar Fig 241

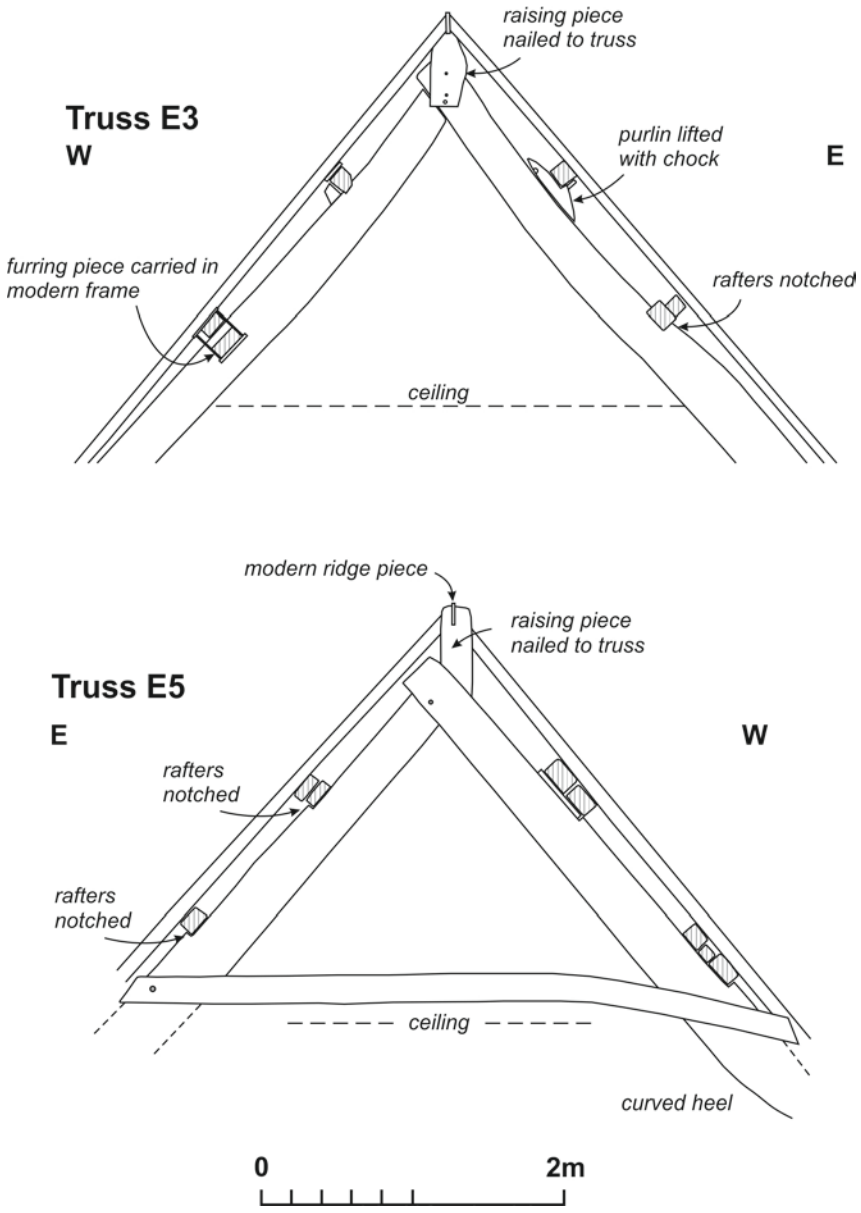
Truss E5, looking south Fig 242

Truss E6, the join between the east and north ranges Fig 243

Detail of suspended bridging beam with double mortices Fig 244



Detail of Truss E2 Fig 245



Detail of trusses E3 and E5 Fig 246

13.2. North range (Figs 247-266)

The north range roof space comprises two main areas separated by a masonry gable (Fig 283). The western extent of the roof covers the first floor Sitting Room and adjacent Staff Room, whilst the eastern part overlies the private apartment including the bedroom and WC and the Oriel Room. This survey has concluded that the north-western corner of the building, along with the eastern range, comprise the earliest phases of construction, pre-dating the inheritance of the property by John Dryden. The extent of John Dryden's rearrangement of that building is however unclear; certainly the building shares a continuous roof with the adjacent Hall which was a later addition, connecting the Tower House to the earlier Wylkyns Farm. The farmhouse was also extended eastwards by one bay, forming the current extent of the Kitchen, and this extension is marked by the masonry gable in the roof and is externally marked by a buttress with vertical join over. The house was extended eastward by Erasmus Dryden in the late 16th / early 17th century with the creation of flanking wings which enveloped the east range.

By recording the lower and upper parts of trusses over the Oriel Room and adjacent bedroom it was possible to reconstruct the profile of a former double arched or coved ceiling rising from moulded wall plates along the north and south walls and framing the oriel window in the east gable (Fig 265). The ceiling was carried by three shaped trusses, N1-N3 (Figs 248-251, 265**)**. The roofing timbers are of oak and largely pit sawn with smaller elements sawn from pit sawn slabs. The truss form comprises heavy principal rafters with threaded purlins, and joined by substantial curved collars which form the upper ceiling arch. The short framing timbers of the coving were carefully tenoned into the undersides of the principal rafters and the precise arrangement varied a little in order to fit variations in the dimensions of the principal rafters. This variation would have been hidden by the ceiling. On Trusses N1 and N2 the coving timbers are tenoned and pegged into the principal rafters while on Truss N3 the collar ends are cut into flat heels into which the vertical coving timber is joined. Empty slots are cut into the upper parts of the coving timbers in order to carry threaded longitudinal rails to support the former ceiling rafters. An exposed tenon at the base of the cove framing of truss N2 suggests another longitudinal rail, this one likely exposed to view and probably moulded. The undersides of the collars and the coving elements retains marks of former lath and plaster (Fig 247). The top of the ceiling would have been supported by central longitudinal beams tenoned into the collars. The collar of Truss N2 has regularly spaced mortice slots on the underside suggesting a former partition though it is unclear if this is a later addition or part of the original layout.

Some scribed in marks, unrelated to the jointing, were recorded including a possible ‘Ave Maria’ mark on a hidden minor timber. This mark may have had a ritual protection role. The raw materials of the roof structure, their working and jointing are typical of the 16th to early 17th-century period.

The masonry chimney to the Bakehouse rises immediately adjacent to Truss N2 and was likely part of a wider phase of alterations in which the first floor gained prominence over the second floor where the decorative ceiling was removed and the space was partitioned and downgraded to a domestic role. The chimney was expanded with the creation of a fourth flue in 1861. This chimney, which serves the Batchelors Room, is externally built in stone to match the pre-existing stack but viewed from the attic consists of a brick stack rising from a substantial masonry core. The additional stack is centrally aligned with Truss N2 and appears to be built around the collar and apex of the truss.

Truss N4 overlies the partition wall between the bedroom and WC and comprises heavy principals with pairs of threaded purlins on each side (Figs 253, 266). The purlins are joined with bridled, double-pegged scarf joints set largely within the through

sockets in the principal rafters (Figs 255, 256). The tongues of the scarfs are concealed by timber left *in situ* on the lower faces. On the east side the two purlin beams running west had clear evidence of previous use as one was smoke blackened and the other deeply moulded (Fig 257). The heavy original collar beam had clearly been reused as it had redundant, empty pegged mortices in its upper face (Fig 254). A light upper collar with defunct mortices on the underside was clearly added later, probably in the 18th to 19th century, and is jointed to the principals with a lap half dovetail secured with two iron nails at each end. This oak timber had been pit sawn from a larger beam pierced by auger holes and the sawing sectioned one of these holes. The form of the auger hole with a flat end indicates the use of a shell type auger rather than the earlier 'spoon bit' which leaves a concave end to the hole. The use of the shell auger has so far been dated to *c*1510 in the Mary Rose and by at least the mid 16th century in London waterfront carpentry, continuing to the 19th century. Above the northern end of the added upper collar a small burn mark can be seen in the principal rafter. At the apex the southern principal rafter is tenoned and double pegged into the side of its pair.

All the original timbers of this roof truss had been pit sawn from hewn oak beams, the principals being 290mm wide by 135mm thick and box halved. The common rafters were of oak, being smaller pit sawn sections and some were furred out, after sagging, with elm timbers. The raw materials, conversion and jointing of the original timbers of this section of roof appear broadly 16th century and include some reused timbers which must be a little earlier.

It was possible to see some of the original guidelines the carpenters had marked on the principal rafters and these comprised pairs of snapped lines of red-brown pigment called 'ruddle' or 'raddle' (as still used by sheep farmers to mark the chests of rams during 'tupping'). These lines were set 100mm (4") apart and were recorded on both faces of each principal rafter running along both edges of the through sockets for the pairs of purlins. Faint traces of similar lines were also visible on the internal arises of the principal rafters timber showing the same pigment had also been used to mark out the timber for conversion by sawing. On the northern purlin a ruddle mark was also seen running across the top edge of the upper purlin socket, thereby setting its limit. The ruddle pigment is a red ochre mixed with a little fatty material, possibly tallow. The survival of such ephemeral carpenters guidelines in pigment is very rare in a roof of this period, though a few later examples have been recorded, such as at the National Trust house *The Vyne* in Hampshire where, in addition to incised Roman numerals, ruddle was used as a crayon for the marking of Arabic numbers in the 18th-century roof. The northern upper purlin of Truss N4 also had an incised VI in its upper face, and the foot of the northern rafters has an incised 1" chisel mark, near the base. Both these marks are likely to have been aids to reassembly of the timbers in situ after being 'framed up' at the carpenter's yard elsewhere.

The ceiling over the bedroom and WC has a similar construction to that over the eastern range rooms, comprising light pit sawn joists supported by a central longitudinal beam with timber hangers nailed to the beam and joists (Fig 266). The central beam has double hollow and ovolo moulding at one edge and the same form was recorded on the moulded wall plate supporting the shaped truss exposed in the Oriel Room. It is probable that with the removal of the decorative ceiling in the early 18th century several of the supporting members were rendered obsolete and were incorporated into the new ceiling.

The roof over west side of the range is framed in a very different style to the eastern half and the two sides are separated by a masonry gable. The gable has a two phase construction, initially providing an end gable to the farmhouse and later extended and thickened with the creation of the chimney stack to serve the Kitchen ranges. It is

unclear whether there was an earlier chimney here prior to the enlargement of the Kitchen.

The three trusses N5 - N7 comprised heavy principal rafters with pairs of threaded purlins on each side supporting light common rafters (Figs 259-261). The principal rafters are tenoned into tie beams which are partially obscured by the ceiling framing (though visible in the ceiling of the Sitting Room) so that the area of likely junction to wall plates was not visible. Pairs of vertical struts rising from the tie beam were also tenoned into the principal rafters just above the lower purlins (Fig 263). Above the upper purlins original short collars are tenoned into the principal rafters.

A very unusual feature of these trusses, and those of the west range roof over the Long Gallery, is that the principal rafters are cut down to less than a third of their depth just above the collars. The apexes are formed of a simple lap joint, though no pegs are visible to secure them. The reason for this unusual form is currently totally obscure. The guidelines for the saw cuts are clearly visible in some cases. Some carpenter's truss identifying marks were also visible on the east faces of two of the trusses, two 1" chisel marks on the second truss from the east end (N6) and single gouge marks on Truss N7. Crow's foot markings were recorded on the east face of Truss N1 adjacent to the upper purlin. Marks such as these enabled trusses to be distinguished during reassembly, and were normally made on the 'upper face' of the frames as it was made set horizontal in the framing yard. A pair of taper burns was noted on the northern strut of truss N2. The west and east ends of this roof were formed by stone cross walls, and this feature may be why the carpenters did not employ any wind braces in the roof (unlike over the west range roof) as they may have considered that the stone walls provided sufficient rigidity against racking forces.

All the timber used for the original elements of the roof is of oak. The upper elements that could be seen clearly had been pit sawn from hewn oak baulks, with the principals and some of the purlins being boxed halved. Other purlins were box quartered with waney corners. A purlin in the south-east corner had clear redundant mortices showing that it was second hand but the other principal timbers appeared original. Scribe marks are visible for the laying out of the defunct mortices. The original raw materials and their working would fit a broad 16th to early 17th-century date range. The exception to this is a recent conifer timber truss (not numbered) fitted at the western end of the roof.

The common rafters had been sawn from thick sawn slabs and the nailing pattern and weathering appears to indicate that they had been turned around during a phase of re-roofing. The roof does not utilise a ridge piece and instead the pairs of rafters are lapped and pegged. A number of furring pieces have been added alongside the rafters.

The ceiling joists are pit sawn oak and are joined with soffit tenons to the tie beams. Sequential Roman numeral assembly marks were recorded on the joist ends and the tie beams at Trusses N6 and N7; it was not possible to view much of the joist arrangement due to the lime-ash floor surface laid on laths over the joists, as well modern insulation material laid on boards (Fig 264). The pairing of assembly marks on the joists and tie beams shows that the roof structure is contemporary with the ceiling.

The north-west stair rises into the north range roof and is enclosed from the attic space with the rafter ends passing though the stair well (Fig 262). The stair fully occupies the bay between Trusses N6 and N7 and the western roof valley descends around the stair. The north range roof is separated from the west range roof by a lath and plaster stud partition set in the truss which crowns the full-height timber-framed bay (Truss W1). A pulley is installed on the north side of the partition, secured to the collar and ancillary collars of the partition, and a rope remains attached to the pulley. The pulley does not overlie the stairwell and since it is fixed in place it is unclear how it functioned; no evidence for a hatch is visible below the pulley.

The exposed lower part of the Oriel Room Truss, N1 Fig 247

Ceiling framing timbers surviving on Truss N2, with chimney breast to the right Fig 248

The south side of Truss N2; note furring of rafters and brick flue added to the chimney stack Fig 249

The west face of Truss N3, looking east Fig 250

Detail of the lower north side of Truss N3 Fig 251

Truss N3, detail of bridle scarfed purlin with empty double peg holes Fig 252

The east face of Truss N4 Fig 253

Detail of the lower north side of Truss N4; note defunct mortice on collar Fig 254

Truss N4, detail of purlins and collar; note faint traces of ruddle on edge of the rafter Fig 255

Truss N4, detail of double pegged scarfed bridle joint Fig 256

Smoke-blackened timber re-used as a purlin, note defunct join on the left side Fig 257

Empty mortice slots on purlin adjacent to Truss N4 Fig 258

The north-west roof, looking east, showing Truss N5 Fig 259

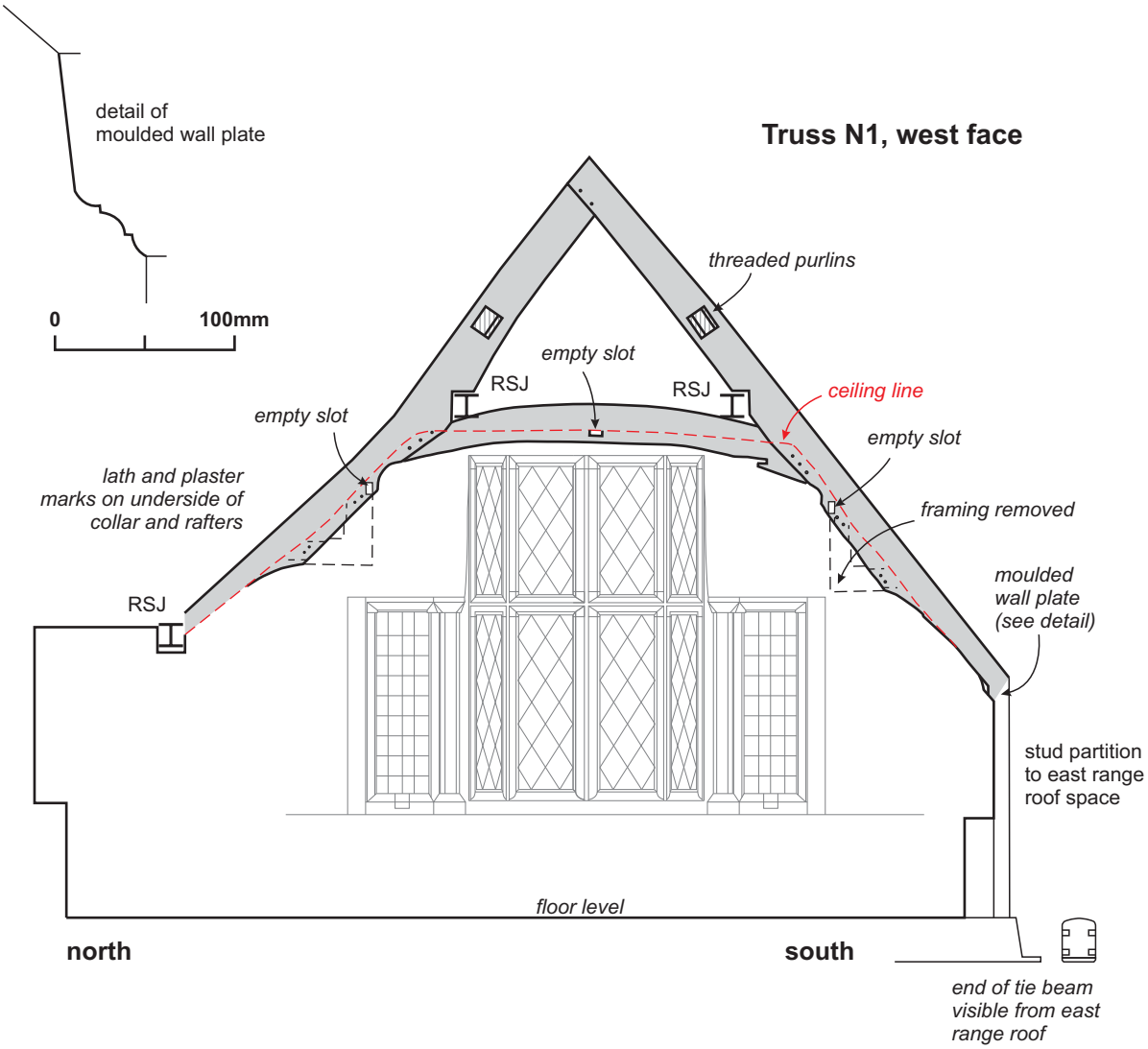
The north-west roof, looking west, showing Truss N7 Fig 260

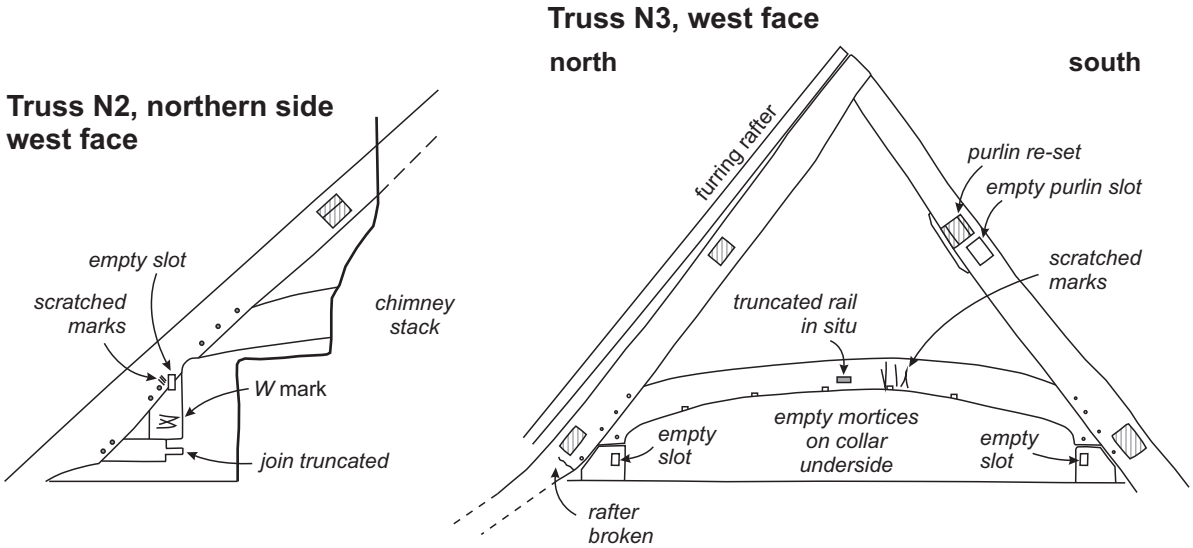
Detail of the collar and purlin arrangements, also showing the apex cutaway Fig 261

The attic stairwell Fig 262

Detail of the strut and lower purlin arrangements Fig 263

The truss, tie beam, and joist arrangement Fig 264



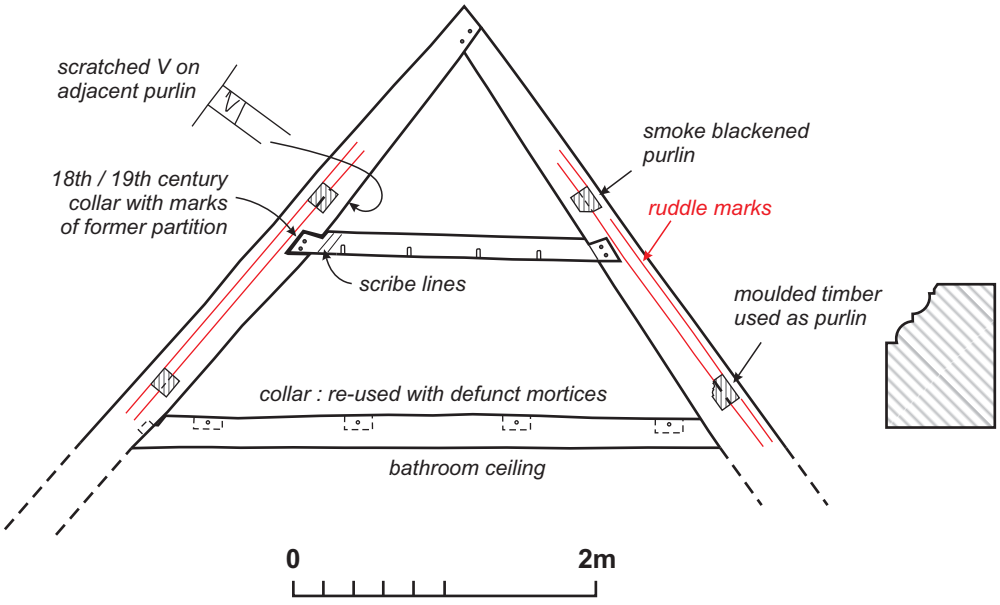


Scale 1:50 (A4)

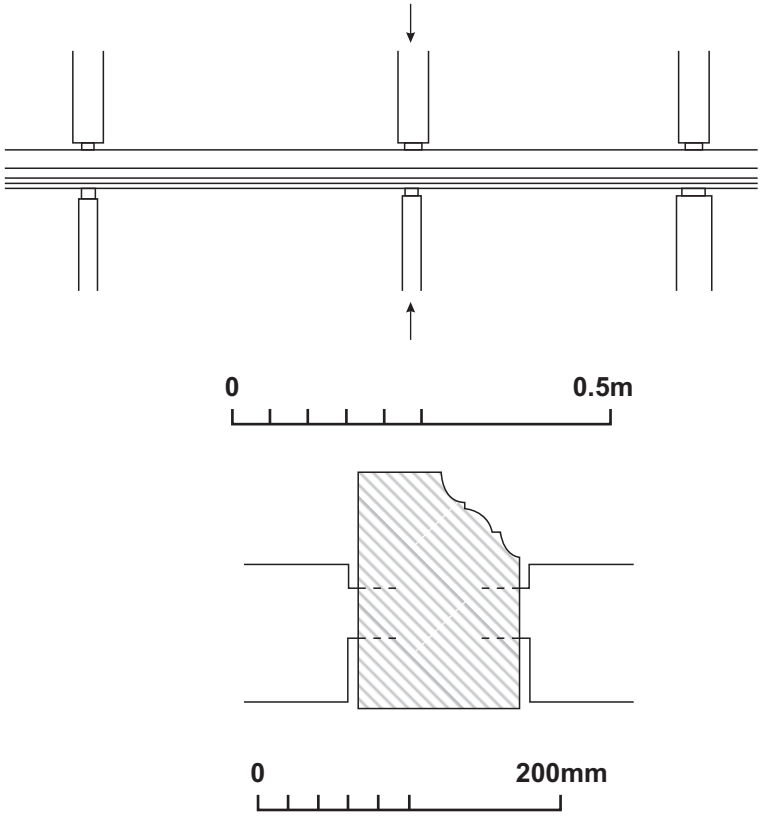
Detail of trusses N1 - N3 Fig 265

Truss N4, east face

south **north**



detail of moulded timber re-used in 18th century ceiling to hold joists



13.3. West range (Figs 267-272)

Access across the west range attic space was limited to a modern walkway with rails that prevented access beyond the walkway. It was not possible to see the joist and tie beam arrangements due to a thick layer of insulating material.

The west range roof over the Hall / Long Gallery was framed using very similar principal trusses to those described in Section 13.2, but they were set somewhat closer together. The trusses, which are labelled from north to south as W1 - W6, with Truss W1 being at the top of the timber-framed bay, also utilise similar raw materials and jointing techniques as those over the north-west roof and both were probably the work of the same carpenters and constructed at the same period. The trusses comprise heavy principal rafters with pairs of threaded purlins on each side supporting the common rafters (Figs 267-269). The tops of the principal rafters are oddly cut down in depth like those of the west range roof and at the apex the rafters are joined using bridle scarfs (Fig 270). The principal rafters are tenoned into tie beams and pairs of vertical struts rise from the tie beams and are tenoned into the principal rafters just above the lower purlins. Above the upper purlins, original short collars are tenoned into the principal rafters. The underside of the collars to trusses W4 and W5 had each had three round-ended mortices indicating former light partition studs relating to a previous division of the attic space. Six common rafters were set between each principal truss and several show signs of lath and plaster marks while others appear to have been turned around.

The threaded purlins were scarfed using the same form of double pegged bridled scarf as recorded in the north range roofs (Fig 271). The purlins are joined with bridled, double-pegged scarf joints set largely within the through sockets in the principal rafters. The tongues of the scarfs are concealed by timber left in situ on the lower faces.

One key difference between the two roofs was the use of small cranked wind braces, either one or two to a bay (Figs 283, 272). These light wind braces were sawn out of oak beams hewn out of logs with an angular curve. They were tenoned into the sides of several of the principal rafters and secured with a single peg. The upper ends appear to have been lapped over the outside of the upper purlins where they were spiked in place, a typical arrangement in 16th to 17th century roofs. The cranked braces were of plank-like form and would have been made in sets of at least four from each hewn beam.

All the original timbers are of oak which had been converted from parent logs hewn first into beams and then sub-divided by pit sawing; on Truss W2 for example the principal rafters were *c*260 wide by 150mm thick and made from beams sawn in half lengthways, i.e. boxed halved, and this was also true of the purlins. On Truss W5 a combination of axe hewing and pit sawing had been used to produce one of the principal rafters. This dual approach was used where the parent log was large enough at one end for sawing off a slab of usable timber but the other smaller end was just hewn to roughly flatten the beam. This approach also indicates an effort to conserve as much useable oak timber as possible rather than just producing wood chip firewood as was the pattern in medieval timber conversion. Elsewhere this has been seen in carpentry from the 16th-17th century and later. The smaller timbers such as the collars, paired vertical struts and common rafters were sawn from sawn slabs and were *c*160 x 110-120mm in section. Overall the raw materials, their conversion and jointing would be typical of the 16th to 17th-century period.

Many of the carpenters' truss identifying marks and joint layout scribes marking the sides of the mortices were still visible on the principal roof trusses. On Truss W1 the collar ends and adjacent principal rafter had been marked with a single strike of a 1” chisel and on Truss W4 two strikes of a 1” chisel had created chevron marks also on the collar and rafter. Crow’s foot markings were recorded on Truss W5 and crescent

gouges on Truss W3. On Truss W6 faint crosses were scribed on the collar ends and adjacent rafter and linear lines were scribed across the junction; similar markings were also used on the joins between the vertical struts and the rafters. In addition to these, several of the trusses showed groupings of linear scratches and cuts set perpendicular to the truss angle and these may be related to the sharpening of pegs by the carpenters. A possible Ave Marie mark was noted on Truss W6. Carpenters' marks or Assembly marks are symbols scratched, incised or chiselled into timber in order to assist in the assembly and re-assembly of timber frames in the carpenters' yard and upon erection in a structure. Such marks generally fall into four main categories: scratched linear or curvi-linear lines, chiselled or incised Roman numerals, crescent form gouges created by stamping with a curve end tool, or marks resembling crows' feet or flags.

> Two basic systems of numbering are found, one numbering members, the other numbering frames. Of these the more common is the former, in which each mark shows the number of a member within a frame, together with a tag to identify the frame to which it belongs. The alternative system was used only in cross frames: each frame is allotted a number which is scribed on each of the main members within it, tags being used to distinguish left from right (Harris 2012, 15).

When found on joists, either on the top side or underside, the numbering is set out in an orderly sequence beginning at one side of the structure and increasing to the opposite end, such as was recorded in the north-west roof over the Sitting Room. Builders' generally utilised a consistent marking format, (i.e. Roman numerals, scratches, etc) and variation in the format can be often be used to determine phases of construction at different times by different carpenters. At the former Salisbury Arms, Hoddesdon, a 15th / 16th-century timber-framed inn, the joists in one part of the building used Roman numerals while in another part of the house crow's foot and flag marks were used and these floors were found to belong to different phases of building (Bassir 2016). Variations in marks within the same structure may indicate that they were created by particular craftsmen who may be working in the same yard but who had their own preferred marking system (Brunskill 1994). This is the most likely explanation for the variation recorded in this and in the western roof. The trusses show a variation in marking but these are consistent on each individual truss showing that each was made by a particular individual.

A peculiar feature of the trusses is that on several examples where the apexes of the principal rafters are cut away and reduced in depth, the undersides of the eastern cutaways have nail marks but these marks are not repeated on the western cutaways.

A pulley wheel in a plank frame has been installed on the south face of Truss W3 and may have formerly been connected to the pulley noted on the north face of Truss W1.

Truss W2, at the northern end of the roof is a modern frame likely added during the restoration works in to strengthen the roof where it joins the north range. The truss comprises heavy principals not joined at the apex, supported by a queen post frame and with angled struts rising from the tie beam to the principal rafters. The purlins are supported by cleats on the backs of the rafters.

As was also noted across the east range roof, the west roof has also been subject to re-contouring to mitigate the sagging of some of the purlins and rafters and several furring pieces were added among the rafters and over several of the original purlins. The western ends of the tie beams of the three southern Trusses, W4, W5 and W6 were provided with additional support in the form of upright posts rising from the Hall ceiling. These posts are visible in the Nursery and Alice's Room where they have moulded edges suggesting their re-use. Truss W6 was also supported centrally by a free-standing oak post located alongside the Long Gallery partition wall. Although the

edges of the roof were not easily accessible they appear to have been joined to the tie beams by means of iron stirrups. The feet of several of the eastern principal rafters appear to have been cut out and replacement lengths added in during restoration works, likely due to water damage. The new lengths were joined to the original timbers by steel straps.

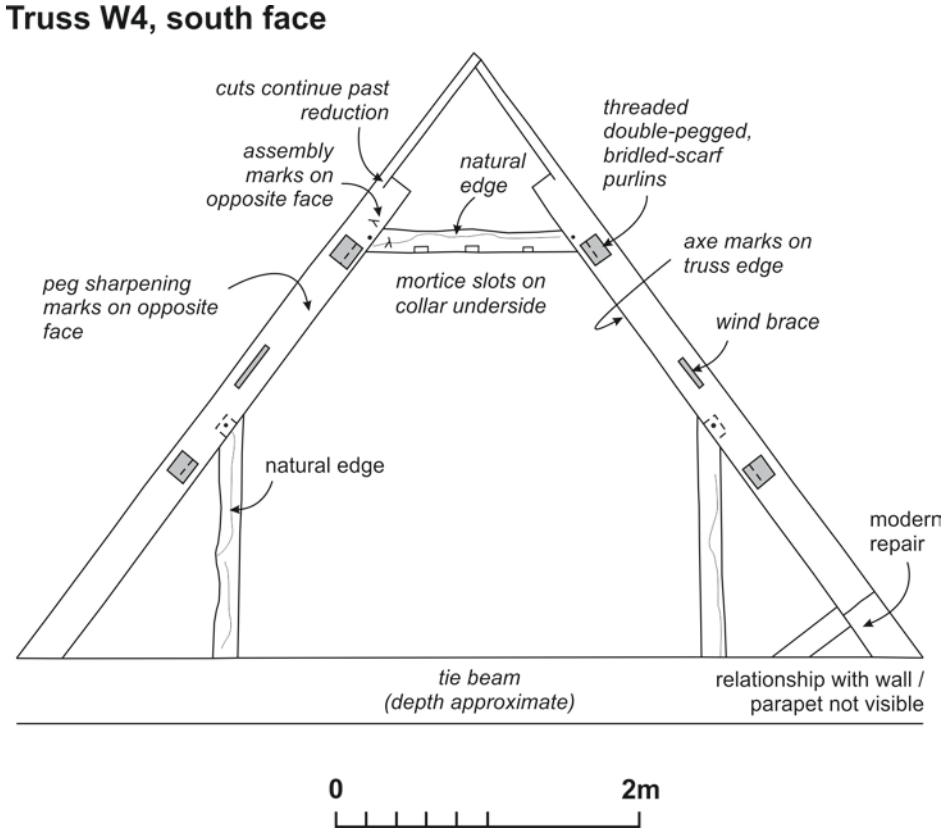
As recorded in the north-west roof space over the Sitting Room, the west range roof has a lime-ash floor, which combined with evidence of former partitions and relict lath nails and traces of lime wash on the inside of some of the rafters indicates that parts of the roof space was occupied at some point in the past, likely as low-status servant accommodation. This use is confirmed by a sign on the blocked door in the Sitting Room labelled as *1st Women Sers Room*. Garret rooms in attics were a common feature of Northamptonshire houses across the social hierarchy and are readily identifiable by small windows set in the end gables. Such spaces were, in larger houses used by domestic staff, and in yeoman houses were used as accommodation for farmhands and labourers. A survey of forty-two 17th and 18th-century vernacular houses in the village of Flore identified that a number of these houses, particularly the larger yeoman houses, had useable garret spaces though none of those examined had a dedicated stair, and at present are accessed only by ladder through a hatch (Bassir 2017). Such spaces were often compartmentalised from the main roof space by wattle and daub partitions. None of those examined had lime ash floors or lath and plaster covering on the roof undersides and it is likely that such features are confined to the higher status houses. Lime ash flooring was generally confined to the upper floors of houses and, as well as providing heat insulation, was a good sound-proofing material, muffling the movement of domestic staff and was also particularly useful in nurseries.

Other features of woodworking interest in this roof space include the cupola frame which was not closely examined during this survey and an underlying oak cupboard with 16th or 17th-century butterfly hinges.

At the south end the roof space is enclosed by a brick gable comprising 16th / 17th century bricks measuring 200-240mm in length, *c*450mm in height and 95-100mm in width, with five courses measuring *c*650mm. The coursing pattern is variable with courses of mixed headers and stretchers interspersed with header or stretcher courses. The bricks are a mixture of red bricks and deliberately over-fired bricks but there is no pattern to their distribution. The distal common rafters are placed over the gable slopes and are visible externally and sealed with flaunching. The internal face of the gable has been recently re-pointed and repaired. Centrally to the gable is a three light cavetto mullion square-headed window which is partly overlain by the adjacent chimney (Fig 27). One of the mullions has been replaced in timber in the same style and is hinged to allow the window to open; this is a modern addition. The window is overlain by a hood mould with label stops. The cavetto moulding would suggest that this window was originally located in the tower house and was reset when the west range was built against the earlier range. The tower house is the only part of the building where an original suite of windows with this moulding type can be seen and the addition of the western range would have made several of the windows redundant.

The chimney has a stepped masonry core with angled coping stones, with a three-flue brick stack on top (Fig 26). The form of the bricks suggests a 17th century date but they have parallel skintle marks not present on the bricks of the adjacent gable. The chimney is clearly a later addition and these bricks are likely re-used. The top of the chimney has bricks of an 18th or 19th century date and there are three clay pots added some time in the 20th century. Early photographs of the house show that three flues had individual brick stacks rising from the chimney crown and were topped with cylindrical clay pots. Each flue was set higher than its neighbour, forming a tapered rise. An undated 19th-century plan of the chimney and roof arrangement labels the flues as Tapestry Room, Dining Room, and 1st Gallery Room (D(CA)472d Undated). It

has been suggested that a chimney was originally located at the south side of the building, and the awkward insertion of the chimney to make it central to the Tapestry and Dining rooms would appear to suggest that this is an 18th century addition and the earlier chimney was removed to allow for the re-facing of the south elevation.



Detail of Truss W4 Fig 267

The west range roof, looking south Fig 268

The brick gable at the south side of the west range roof Fig 269

Detail of the collar and purlin arrangements and apex cutaway Fig 270

Detail of strut and lower purlin arrangements Fig 271

The cranked wind braces; note turned over rafters Fig 272

13.4. South range (Figs 273-282)

The roof space over the Tapestry Room has been made habitable and now serves as a kitchen and WC for the Landmark Trust. Two trusses are partly visible in the kitchen, the lower ends being hidden within the modern crawlspaces at the sides of the room, and the apexes hidden by the ceiling. By removing a panel behind the washing machine it was possible to see the lower northern part of the western truss. Similarly, through a small hatch in the ceiling over the WC it was possible to insert a camera to take some views of the apex arrangement and rafters. The trusses comprise fairly heavy waney oak principal rafters, with threaded purlins with double-pegged bridled scarfs as seen in the other roofs of the house. The purlins were also secured by a peg running through the principal rafters, further locking the two timbers in the socket. The upper collar beams, partially visible at ceiling level have redundant peg holes and mortice sockets indicating a possible reuse of these elements. Both trusses have empty peg and mortice sockets for an additional two sets of collars at mid-height and floor level, a very unusual arrangement which in their original form would have made the use of the attic space impossible. A chiselled carpenter's mark "II" was cut adjacent to the mid-level mortice socket of the south blade of the western truss; a possible "I" is located on the opposing blade. A scribed V was noted on the underside of the northern purlin adjacent to the upper collar. At their apex the blades are joined diagonally and pegged, with the northern blade overlapping the other. The lower collar mortice was double pegged and no carpenter's marks were visible. The use of oak and the jointing utilised would suggest a 16th or 17th-century origin for this roof. The few common rafters which were visible during the survey appeared to be oak, roughly square in section, some with wane and bark at the edges. A small area of the wall plate was visible in the northern crawl space and the rafters appear to rest directly on top of the wall.

The Drawing Room roof structure, as well as the remains of the former vaulted ceiling, is described in Section 9.2.

The south-eastern roof space over Spenser's Room is accessed through a hatch in the southern roof slope, and a walkway along the southern parapet allows an approach via the Tower Sitting Room. At the west side of the roof, separating it from the Drawing Room roof is a stone gable set onto the timber-framed partition at the west side of Spenser's Room. To the east the roof is partly enclosed by a masonry gable and chimney stack and the space around this wall is sealed with lath and plaster. To the east the roof is bounded by the eastern gable wall.

The roof frame comprises a cross gable form with valleys at the join between the south and east ranges (Fig 282). There is a single principal rafter truss positioned centrally to the south roof, with its norther rafter seated into the stonework of the chimney and the southern rafter carried onto the wall plate although this was not visible. The principal rafters are boxed heart oak, sawn and hewn from baulk, and joined by a tenoned and double-pegged oak collar at mid-height. At the apex the principal rafters are tenon or bridle joined and pegged. The common rafters appear to be bridle joined and pegged at the apex. There are two sets of threaded purlins at each side of the roof and the purlins are joined with bridled, double-pegged scarf joints set largely within the through sockets in the principal rafters. Chiselled Roman numeral assembly marks were noted on the truss members and a sequential set are also located on the common rafter apexes. The purlins are lightly notched to carry the common rafters and the lower southern purlin at the west side of the truss was truncated to accommodate access through the inserted hatch. The collar is set at a height which prohibits free movement in the space and it is clear that the roof space has not functioned as a useable attic.

The purlins are at each end of the roof carried in the two gables and the beam ends have been latterly strengthened with steel straps (Fig 280). Stone and concrete repairs have been carried out where the purlins enter the walls.

A large part of the ceiling frame is hidden underneath a board walkway which was added during restoration works. The ceiling is supported by light joists spanning between two east-west tie beams offset from the north and south edges of the room and carried at each end in the masonry gables. Short trimmer joists span the edges of the roof between the two tie beams and lighter plates which appear to be set just above the wall-plate proper.

Set north to south across the two ceiling tie beams is a waney-edged oak collar set adjacent to the west side of the truss. This piece is raised over the beams by wooden saddles. It is not jointed into the principal rafters but might be nailed to them, perhaps acting as a rudimentary collar. At its eastern side it underlies one of the purlins which it might be supporting.

Spanning between the two masonry gables is a defunct and substantial bridging beam set centrally to the underlying room (Fig 281). This is comprised of boxed heart oak and has double tenon joist slots on each side, some appearing to retain truncated tenons in situ. This beam is almost entirely hidden underneath the modern walkway but is visible at the western end where it is carried on the sill of a square window opening in the western gable. The end of the beam has been attacked by beetles and has significantly deteriorated. The beam appears to serve no structural function to either the roof or the Spenser Room ceiling. It is probable that this beam formerly supported the ceiling before the raising of its level to allow for the creation of the present Rococo ceiling in the mid-18th century though it is unclear why the beam was retained instead of being removed. The waney collar spanning east-west and carried on the ceiling tie beams may be jointed to this bridging beam but it was not possible to confirm the interaction of these two pieces.

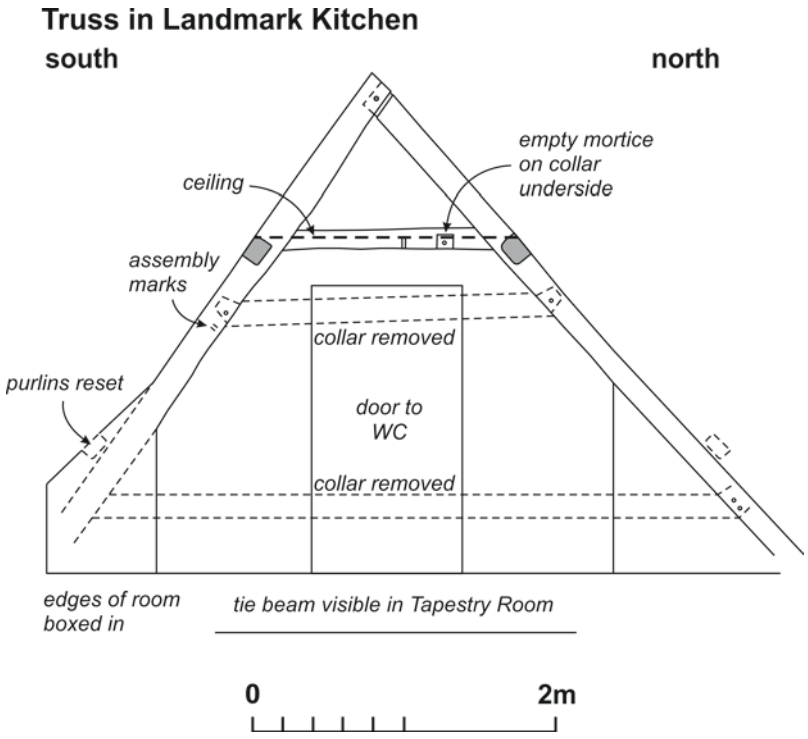
The square opening in the gable between the Drawing Room and Spenser Room measures 1.6m in width by 1.5m in height and is spanned by a timber lintel. The lintel has chamfered underside edges with simple stops to the jambs. The sill comprises two lengths of timber, one retaining an axe-cut V shaped groove. The jambs are formed of upright stone blocks and these are not keyed into the surrounding masonry. Above the lintle is a small wooden frame which allows access to the steel frame over the Drawing Room ceiling. The stonework above the lintel is entirely modern, having been re-built during restoration works. As previously noted, the west face of the gable is plastered and the plasterwork is carried through half-way into the jambs and ending at a clear straight vertical line. These features would suggest that a formerly glazed eastward looking window was set here. In contrast with other windows however this one lacks quoins at the jambs and the lack of bonding between the stones of the jamb and the surrounding masonry might suggest that it is an insertion.

An eastward looking window in this gable would support the possibility that the two eastern parts of the south range, i.e. Drawing Room and Spenser's Room are of different phases and that the masonry gable represents the disconnected remains of a former end gable. If such is true however, it seems impractical to undercut a masonry wall and, while retaining the gable, replace the removed stone wall with a timber-framed partition. As noted in Section 6.3 however, there is a distinct kink in the northern wall line at this gable, and the two parts of the building are not aligned as one might expect from a single phase build.

The Landmark Trust Kitchen, looking west, showing the two trusses Fig 273

Detail of the rafter, purlin and collar arrangement; note empty pegged slot for middle missing collar Fig 274

Detail of double pegged slot for lower missing collar Fig 275



Detail of truss in the Landmark Kitchen Fig 276

The Drawing Room ceiling frame, looking west Fig 277

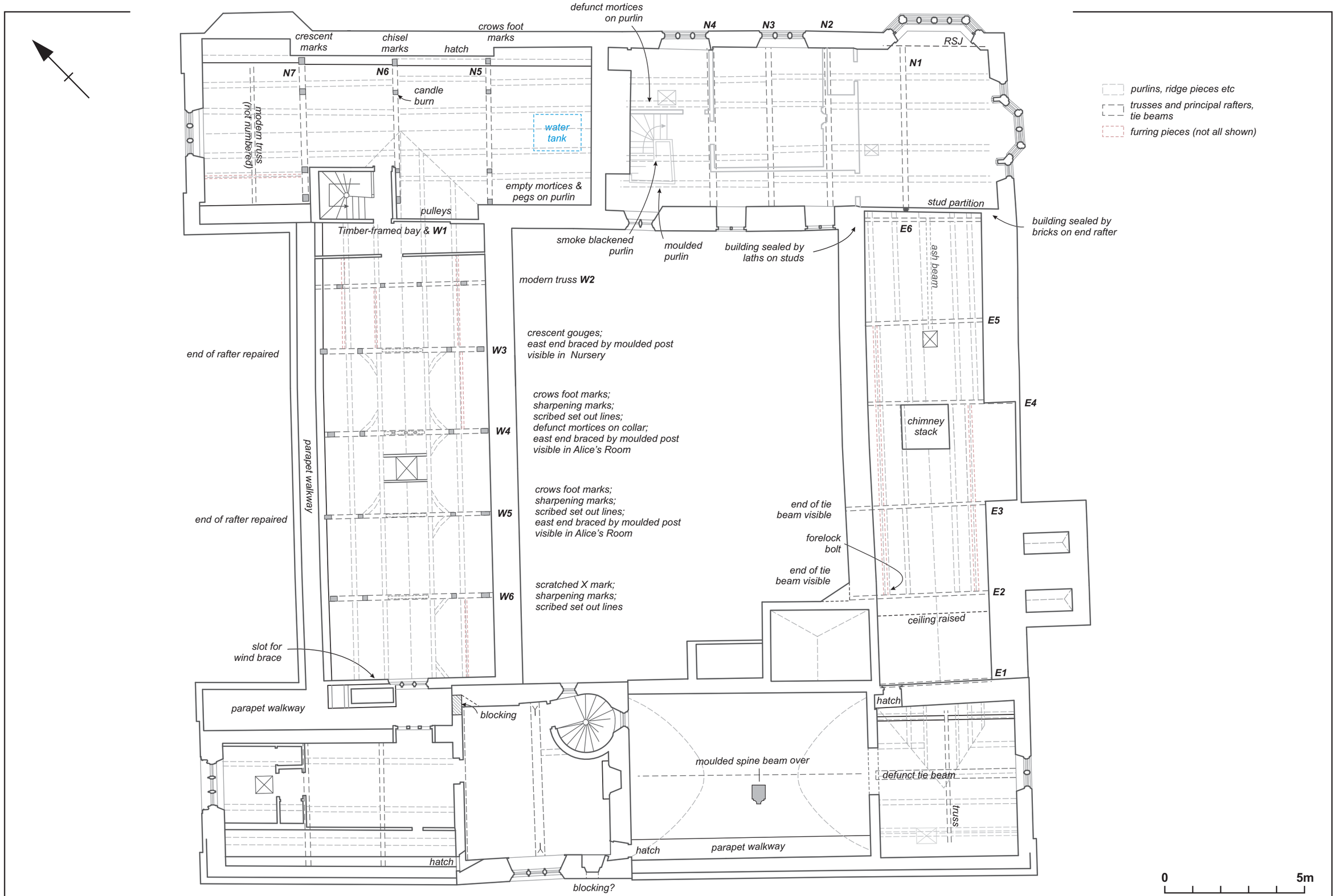
1980s photograph showing the of ribs and moulded spine of former barrel vault ceiling (CANT40BLK) Fig 278

1980s view of the Drawing Room ceiling and rafters with parapet leadwork removed (CANT35RED) Fig 279

The stone gable over the Spenser's Room partition wall Fig 280

The exposed end of defunct bridging beam; note truncated double mortice Fig 281

View of the south face of the gable and chimney Fig 282



Scale 1:125 (A3)

Plan of the roofs Fig 283

14 DISCUSSION

Although the development of the house from the mid 16th century is intrinsically linked to the history of the Dryden family and the wider social and historical context, this survey has attempted to explore the evolution of the house primarily by examining the available physical evidence, comparing and contrasting the elevations and plans, the building materials, construction techniques, and architectural features. The utilisation of new rapid survey techniques such as hand-held laser survey provided opportunity for spatial analysis of the complicated internal spaces, allowing isolated or disconnected features to be accurately projected through floors and ceilings in order to reconstruct lost spaces.

This report, as far as the available evidence allows, seeks to provide a satisfactory accounting for the sometimes contradictory evidence for phasing and alterations presented both externally on the elevations and in the rooms, floors, stairs and roof spaces and while conclusions are drawn about certain areas and developmental sequences, other questions have remained unanswered due to a lack of clear evidence. Archaeological attendance during any future works to the house will be essential for gathering data that may help refine knowledge of the building's construction. A dendrochronological survey will be invaluable in confirming or refuting the phasing as set out in this report and may provide accurate rather than comparative dating for many parts and features of the house.

Despite the regional fashion for dating alterations and extensions, no date stones are to be found around the building and little or no documentary evidence detailing early alterations is known to exist. Certain phases of construction can be attributed to particular members of the Dryden family and thus assigned a date range based on the known chronology of succession and inheritance. None of the owners, including Edward, made a clean sweep of previous work and this has resulted in a stacking or overlap of fabric with parts of the building being repeatedly modified to accommodate phases of alteration.

14.1. Phase 1, Origins and early development, 16th century

North-West block – Wylkyns Farm

It is known from documentary sources that when John Dryden came into possession of the estate in the mid 16th century, whether through marriage or by descent, there was already a building or buildings on the site of the present house. This is described in an indenture of 1573 as a farmhouse belonging to Robert Wylkyn, village carpenter (NT 2016). The size and nature of this house is not known but due to its vernacular characteristics the east range has generally been accepted as comprising this farmhouse, though others have suggested that the central part of the south range containing Spenser's Room was this house, or that the two parts together were the early building. A number of factors complicate the identification of the earlier farmhouse; it is unclear when it was built and from what materials, what the original extent and plan form of the building may have been, and what alterations may have been undertaken to this building before it passed to the Dryden family.

Some idea as to the building's form may be derived by examination of known structures of the period. Northamptonshire lies on a wide belt of Jurassic stone which provides a wealth of readily available sedimentary stones including limestone, sandstone and mudstone, all of which have contributed to the architectural character of the region. The smaller houses and cottages often utilised materials sourced from within 1km distance, thereby varying considerably in appearance, and it has been noted that the village building stones can be read as a geological map (Sutherland 2003, 114). Larger houses, halls and churches, while also constructed of local materials, often incorporated imported freestone for decorative elements, mullioned

windows or ashlar. The county also shows a widespread use of cob, which is generally associated with low status houses though as shown at Hayes Barton, Devon, the birth place of Sir Walter Raleigh, the material could be turned to larger buildings and was not necessarily associated with cheap or low quality construction.

The raw materials used for cob were inexpensive, since the clay was often dug from the ground on the construction site, its construction did not require specialist construction knowledge, and a cob building could be raised fairly quickly. It has been suggested that cob building was a relatively advanced construction method which evolved from wattle and daub construction (Seaborne 1967). The earliest reference to the farmhouse, an indenture of 1573 describes a “Mansion House, lately Wylkyns farme”, suggesting that the building inherited by John Dryden was not a cottage but likely a stone-built house displaying the characteristic form of the larger houses of the county, though as herein discussed there may have been an accompanying cob-built structure on site which also became incorporated into the house.

Archaeological excavations of Saxon and early medieval domestic structures, such as the 11th-century hall at Sulgrave have shown that the standard medieval plan of open hall with opposing doors to a screens passage, and adjoining service bay had appeared by the late Saxon period, though no evidence for cross-wings in the county have been found predating the 13th century (Woodfield 1981). A study of Northamptonshire buildings in the period 1200 to 1475 identified both linear, single block plans and buildings with cross-wings which were part of the original arrangement. The single block plan appears to have been an earlier form which gave way to the cross-wing plan whose development was “concomitant with the combining of both services and the retiring rooms at the same end of the open hall, leaving the hall in an end-hall relationship” (Woodfield 1981, 157).

This survey suggests that the farmhouse occupied the north-west corner of the present house and took the form of a cross-wing or L-plan house with two bays in the north range, and with a southward projecting block perhaps containing the hall. Examples of cross-wing plans may be seen at The Grange, Haversham (13th / 14th century) and Church Farm, Newnham (early 14th century). It is clear that this early building laid the foundation for the later development of the house, acting as an anchor for the siting of the later expansions and perhaps dictating the floor levels within them. It is possible that the east range was also a part of Wylkyns Farm, though separate from the main house. Whether the building was a domestic structure agricultural, or perhaps of mixed function is unclear; certainly it appears to have been two-storied and its size is comparable to many of the regional domestic structures of the post-medieval period. This part of the house utilises raised crucks or cruck-like principal rafters which were a common feature of domestic buildings in the 17th and 18th centuries and is a roofing form often found in association with cob buildings.

Upon coming into possession of the farmhouse, John Dryden likely undertook a phase of modernisation and renewal which included a fashionable painted decorative scheme, fragments of which remain in the north-west Sitting Room. This scheme, like that in the Winter Parlour, promotes and celebrates his marriage to Elizabeth Cope and incorporates the heraldry of both families. The painted wall of the Sitting Room is part of a timber-framed bay which spans from ground to roof and is an integral part of the house framing, supporting bridging beams for all of the floor levels including the ‘mezzanine’ level. The current roof, a later addition which continues over the west range, is joined into the topmost tie beam of the bay.

It has been demonstrated that the Winter Parlour in its current form is not an original room, but instead an earlier ground floor room was raised in height to accommodate panelling perhaps imported from another part of the house. This required the truncation / amalgamation of two rooms which formerly continued the level now referred to as the

‘Mezzanine’. It is clear that the mezzanine also continued across the Kitchen but was reduced to a corridor and is now mainly represented by the Cook’s and Parlour Maid’s Rooms. The panels were likely already painted prior to being moved to the Painted Parlour since in several places the designs have become mismatched or truncated and do not form a cohesive scheme.

At present it is not possible to determine with certainty if the timber-framing and floor levels in this part of the house were already present in the pre-Dryden house or if an open-hall was floored by John Dryden. If the projecting bay to the south comprised an open-hall and the cross-wing contained a parlour and service room, then the former is more likely; at present there is no evidence that the floor levels continued past the bay separating the cross wing and southern bay, however a seemingly original window in the Parlour Maid’s Room may suggest that this area was also floored.

It is probable that the alterations which produced the Winter Parlour were carried out by Erasmus rather than John. The fireplaces in both the Winter Parlour and Sitting Room have four-centred arches and have a near identical moulding pattern which suggests that they are contemporary. The brickwork in the reveals and back of the Sitting Room fireplace confirm a probable mid 16th-century date of construction, suggesting that both were added by John Dryden. It is possible however that while the fireplaces are mid 16th century, the stack itself may be part of the earlier farmhouse. Both fireplaces respect floor levels which were already in place prior to the alterations to the mezzanine levels.

Chimneys began to appear in England in the 12th century, the idea having been introduced from Italy. A stone chimneypiece, with arched fireplace flanked by columns and carved capitals, is located at Hemingford Grey manor house (*c*1160) and is among the earliest examples in the country (Bailey 1983, 43). Chimneys appeared initially on upper floors which generally provided sleeping accommodation. Early fireplaces had wide openings which were draughty and provided poor smoke dispersal but the designs were gradually improved and saw a continuing reduction in fire openings in later centuries. The adoption of smoke retention techniques had variable uptake with smaller cottages in rural areas retaining open hearths, smoke bays or smoke hoods into the 17th century. These houses, often only single storied, began to have upper floors and inglenook fireplaces added during the period of the 'Great Rebuilding' of the 16th century and the second phase of rebuilding in the 17th and 18th centuries. Ashlar chimneys were costly in terms of materials and workmanship and many early chimneys were constructed of wattle and clay and the use of such materials persisted in some areas into the 19th century (Innocent 1916). In Northamptonshire, cottages of the 17th and 18th century were provided with small brick chimneys, generally set at the end gables while larger houses had ashlar chimneys at the gables and centrally at the bay divisions. A larger farmhouse of the early 16th century or with earlier origins would likely have had a chimney added by the mid 16th century even if it initially had an open hearth and it seems probable that John Dryden inherited a heated building.

The masonry stack to the Winter Parlour and Sitting Room is set back from the eastern cellar wall which in turn is misaligned with the line of the main western elevation and it is possible that cellar is a later addition to the original house though, if this is the case, its creation would presumably have required the underbuilding of existing walls. The ground floor fireplace is considerably offset from its chimney and the flue is angled steeply to connect into the north wall. The removal of the former mezzanine level room from the north-west corner of the house also presents the question of how or if this room was heated, and whether evidence for a flue at a higher level remains on the stack. A limited examination of the lost space between the Sitting Room floor and the Winter Parlour ceiling reveals that the masonry stack rises to the underside of the Sitting Room floor.

Interpretation of the north-western area is complicated considerably by the alterations surrounding and associated with the stair which rises from the kitchen to the attic in several disjointed sweeps. At its core the stair appears to comprise a spiral stair or vice with an octagonal newel post which now survives at the upper levels of the tower, but this was altered in order to provide additional landings at first floor level. The stairwell projecting into the Sitting Room clearly overlies the floorboards of that room which were crudely truncated and left in section. The newel post which rises from ground level is stopped at the mezzanine corridor and another octagonal post with no obvious underlying support continues the rise to the attic. It is probable that the upper newel post is in-situ and the lower part was truncated and reincorporated into the stair following alterations at the mid-level. An examination of the under-stair structure in the Kitchen reveals a substantial amount of re-used timber with numerous defunct joint slots, supporting the probability of alterations to the stair at its lower levels. The Great Stair in the tower may have been added by Erasmus Dryden in the early 17th century and its creation removed an earlier spiral stair so it is possible that the material from that stair may have been recycled during alterations to the north-western stair.

Tower House

John Dryden's first addition to the property was a Tower House standing a short distance to the south of the farmhouse and not initially connected to it. The tower contained a suite of domestic rooms accessed by spiral stairs and the adjoining block contained larger entertaining rooms at ground and first floor. The walls were primarily stone built but faced in brick, though it is possible that the brick-facing may have been added at a later date to unify the tower-house with the later west range and the farmhouse. It was not possible to view the fabric underlying the external render and no photographs of the exposed external walling were found during archival research.

The tower house as a building type reached its maximum development in the border districts of Scotland where the name Peel, or Peel-Tower was given to such structures. The ancestral connection of the Dryden family to Cumbria is well documented and it seems natural that John Dryden might replicate this plan form on his new estate. Earlier tower houses, such the 14th-century castle of Lochleven were storied, with storage in the basement, a common hall or parlour at ground level, the Lord's hall at first floor level and sleeping accommodation in the upper floor or garret (Simpson 1961). 14th and 15th-century improvements to the tower house plan form contained additional rooms within the tower, or held within an adjoining wing or 'jamb'. The addition of a jamb to the tower provided more private accommodation than might be afforded within the tower itself. The primary stair type in these houses was the spiral stair whose circular well intruded on the interior space and it became commonplace to provide wide stairs up to the jamb hall level only, with a smaller turret stair serving the upper floors. Although associated with the troubled border regions, towers are a "frequent theme in domestic building of any pretention over much of the British Isles" with examples of fortified houses, free-standing towers, and tower-and-halls at Little Whenham, Longthorpe, Doddington, Broughton, Buckden, and Tattershall (Jope 1961, 204). By the 16th century, the stability of the Tudor state and decline of feudalism, as well as redefined expectations of the comfort and privacy provided by the house, coupled with the introduction of gunpowder weapons against which traditional fortifications were increasingly ineffective, led to a decline of the tower house as defensive structure though the tower form continued to be implemented in domestic planning.

It is curious that the west wall of the tower comprises solid walling only in the upper levels and in the basement; between these levels the partitioning wall comprises studwork with tie beams at the floors and ceilings and these carry the weight of the overlying stonework. The RCHM description of the house (Heward and Taylor 1996)

suggests that the tower did not originate as such but was raised by two storeys to form a tower, thus explaining the lack of a solid wall at the lower levels. This survey however has seen no definitive evidence in the visible fabric to confirm this proposal. If the tower and adjoining block were constructed at the same time it is possible that it was not thought necessary to provide a substantial wall between the two blocks and instead the construction relied on the oak tie beams to carry the upper west wall.

As already noted, the tower is principally stone-built, with brick facing to the main elevations. The lower part of the north elevation was however left in stone since it was screened by the west range and the same also applies to the east elevation of the west range which was likewise out of public sight. Such selective use of materials is common practice in architecture where expensive facing materials are used on the visible façade of buildings and cheaper materials used out of sight.

The tower presents a suite of windows with mouldings of the same style and unlike in other parts of the house where recycling of window elements was common, these consist of uniform frames contemporary with the structure they are found in, though at least one or two have been re-positioned to work with changes in floor level. The windows here, except for those to the vice stair, have cavetto or hollow-moulded stone mullions with arched lights and recessed spandrels. Except for the sash windows, the primary window form at Canons Ashby is the square headed ovolo mullion and the use of this window type appears to have become prevalent in Northamptonshire from the 17th century with numerous examples visible in the larger houses of the county. While sashes were used on many of the halls and manor houses from the 18th century, in the Northampton and Banbury regions window design retained its medieval character, providing much of the regional architectural characteristic. Stone-mullioned windows continued to be used on yeoman houses until the 18th century whilst cottages, many previously unglazed or with shutters, had wooden framed casements and sashes added in the 19th century.

Surveys of window mouldings in the Banbury, Cotswold and Monmouthshire regions suggest that after the mid-16th century three mullion types appear: cavetto, flat-splay or chamfer, and ovolo (Wood-Jones 1963). The cavetto or hollow-section mullion is most closely related to the medieval prototype with recorded examples between the mid 16th and early 17th centuries. Earlier examples of cavetto section windows can be seen in several churches in this region. Splay or chamfer mouldings are more ubiquitous and numerous examples can be found through the 16th to 18th centuries. Ovolo mouldings appear on larger yeoman and manorial houses and were often rendered in limestone which was a more suitable material for complex moulding. The first dated example in the surveyed areas is at Wroxton Abbey, (1615). "In the period of renewed building activity following the Civil War this type was used in many of the larger yeoman dwellings, with dated examples occurring up to 1660" (Wood-Jones, 1963, 259).

In the Cotswold, Banbury and Northamptonshire regions, cavetto moulding is frequently found in association with four-centred arched windows. A useful comparison to Canons Ashby is Gayton Manor House (mid 16th century, 1535 according to present owner). This house was built on a cruciform plan presenting gables with full height projecting bays to four sides and comprises a cellar, two-storeys and attic. The house incorporates a range of cavetto mullion windows of variable dimensions, with two-light windows to the cellars and smaller rooms, tall three-light windows to the upper rooms and stacked windows in one of the projecting gables. The stacked windows are comparable to the western window of the Tapestry Room, though lacking the additional moulded spine ridges and the two houses support the phasing of this window type to the mid 16th century.

The two rooms remaining in the upper part of the tower are likely representative of the arrangement of the lower level prior to the creation of the Great Stair in the early 17th century. These rooms are accessed by a spiral stair which stops at first floor level upon entering the body of the tower. This report suggests that this stair did not originally continue past this point and the lower levels were accessed by a separate stair. It is noted at Canons Ashby that octagonal newel posts were the preferred means of supporting the spiral stairs, and another example is present in the north-west stair, with a third embedded in the wall adjacent to the Tapestry Room door. A comparable example of Octagonal newel post is recorded at Gayton House in a dog-leg staircase with turned balusters (Listing No. 1293835, HE 2018b). The octagonal section would seem to be the ideal shape for this work since it presents flat faces in all directions, allowing the treads to be solidly fitted.

As recorded in the tower basement a flagstone stair rises from the basement to the ground floor and it is likely that this rise was continued upward as a timber stair in the north-west corner of the tower. A small first floor window in this position was deliberately left unblocked when the Hall was built suggesting that the stair remained in-situ at this time. Although this stair would not be able to function with the current access between Tower and Long Gallery, this is a later creation and access was formerly through the Tapestry Room.

It was noted that the lattice glazing to the arched windows of the tower house and also to some of the windows of in the north-west corner of the building is much smaller in scale than the lattices to most of the other windows and it is likely that these windows were built with glazing rather than being glazed later. Evidence for the use of window glass in high status buildings can be found dating to the Roman and Saxon periods and by the 13th century many churches had stained glass windows, but prior to the 15th century this material was unaffordable to all but the wealthiest in English society. “The use of window glass became more widespread towards the late 15th century and throughout the Tudor period but was still so valued that as recorded at Alnwick Castle in 1567 window glass was lifted out of the window frames and stored away when the owner was not in residence” (Clifton-Taylor 1987, 392).

Unglazed lattice windows formed of bars or stanchions crossed diagonally appeared in wide use in medieval houses earlier than glass and were often covered with shutters or the lattice was filled with horn or canvas (Innocent 1916). "By the sixteenth century glass must have been normal not only in palaces but in most houses of any pretension, including town houses...it was at this time that the lattice with diamond panes began to be popular, and as early as 1505 we hear of the purchase of quarelles (quarries) of glass for such work" (Harden 1961, 57). By the 17th century the use of window glass in the form of quarries had spread to the smallholder level but the cottages of labourers often remained unglazed into the 18th century, relying on wooden shutters, horn, or stretched oiled canvas to cover their windows.

The present chimney stack serving fireplaces on the north side of the Dining and Tapestry Rooms was likely created in the early 18th century and the original chimney to these rooms was probably located on the south side of the building as an external stack. This chimney would have prevented the creation of an orderly southern façade and was relocated by Edward Dryden. Although it is somewhat incongruous to the symmetry of the west elevation it is much less intrusive than an external chimney would be to the south elevation. While it is possible that the current disconnection of the west range roof from the south range roof may be a result of this alteration, this survey has not seen evidence for a former join between the two roof structures. That the chimney stack partly blocks a window in the west range gable would suggest that the roofs were not originally joined together and the brick gable is original.

West Range

The West Range, comprising Hall and Long Gallery was constructed by John Dryden in order to join the tower house and the former Wylkyns Farm farmhouse. This arrangement produced an H-plan house with a central hall and off-centre cross passage, service range and parlours to the north, and parlours and entertaining rooms to the south. The west range has an unsatisfactory join to the tower, truncating the string courses, and the wall is recessed around a small blocked window to the former tower stair. The roof is not joined to that over the Tapestry Room and instead stops at a flat gable which incorporates a cavetto mullion window likely sourced from the tower house. The position of the west range in relation to the buildings at the north and south was dictated by a need to centralise the range to the tower house, and the positions of its east and west walls were dictated by the pre-existing walls of the farmhouse whose alignment was continued by the new building.

It is evident that floor levels across the south range have been lowered wholesale and this lowering post-dates the construction of the hall. The lowered floor level is flush to the current hall floor level, which at first appears problematic to the phasing, however the floor level at the high end of the hall was formerly raised by a dais at that end of the room and thus would have provided a flush surface to the higher level of the south range.

Towards the northern end of the west range are vertical joins in both the east and west walls where the new range was joined to the earlier farmhouse. This join is offset by one bay or *c*3m from the outward splay of the north range and is carried into the internal layout resulting in somewhat defunct areas on the ground floor but containing the Parlour Maid and Cook's Rooms at mezzanine level. At first floor level this layout is not carried through in the Long Gallery. The line of the join is also carried into the cellar where it is marked by the end wall of the west range cellar. It appears likely that the southern end of Wylkyns Farm either terminated at this point or continued a little way beyond and was reduced back to allow for the construction of the Hall. A single chamfer mullion window is present in the Parlour Maid's Room and appears *in situ*. The south window jamb is directly aligned with the rough vertical join and if this window is indeed original to the farmhouse it would support the notion that the southern block of the farmhouse was truncated back. Within the room a tie beam spanning the width of the west range is aligned with the joins of the east and west walls and is oddly offset from the present south wall.

It has been suggested that the Hall was formerly open to the roof and later ceiled to produce the Long Gallery. This survey found no evidence for such an alteration; the present roof structure displays no smoke blackening associated with open hearths, though by the mid 16th century it seems unlikely that a house of this status would have an open fire. The roof framing is such that it was not intended to be visible from below, having no decorative aspect to the timber work and providing only structural support. At present there is no evidence to suggest a re-roofing of the west range though the construction of this range was accompanied by a re-roofing of the former Wylkyns Farm. The re-roofing of Wylkyns Farm was carried across one bay of the eastward arm of the north range where a vertical join clearly distinguishes the later wing from the earlier part of the house. While it is possible that this bay is part of the earlier farmhouse, there are discrepancies in the external elevation at the corner where they meet, including a difference in eaves height and an awkward angle in the corner wall to prevent the blocking of one of the windows. It is probable therefore that, in order to achieve symmetry with the tower house, John Dryden expanded the farmhouse eastward by a single bay. The resulting layout achieved by joining the farmhouse to the tower house produced an H plan house mimicking the traditional medieval layout of Hall with cross passage, with service rooms on the low end and parlours at the high end.

It is interesting to note that in contrast to the cavetto mullion windows of the tower house, the west range and former farmhouse present an almost complete range of ovolo moulded windows, showing a change in fashion between the construction and upgrading of these parts of the house between the mid to late 16th century. The use of ovolo mullion windows, if original to John Dryden's works and not later additions, is a relatively early use of this window type in Northamptonshire and shows his desire for fashionable expression.

A question which arises when considering the development of the house relates to the matching westward projecting bays which flank the western elevation. Unless John Dryden, from the very outset of his works sought to arrive at a symmetrical H-plan house it seems unlikely that the west elevation of the tower house would coincidentally align in plan with the west end of Wylkyns Farm. However the awkward accommodation of the stairwell window at the join of the Hall and Tower and the lack of a proper join between the roofs would suggest that the joining of these two ranges was not planned as the builders would presumably have pre-empted this future development. This would suggest therefore that in order to achieve the exacting alignment of the farmhouse and tower house end gables, that the farmhouse was either extended outward to match, or, if it was formerly wider, reduced back. At present there is insufficient evidence to provide a satisfactory answer to this question.

The current Kitchen floor level is set *c*1m lower than that in the Hall and in the Winter Parlour, requiring steps down from both of those rooms. This lower floor level is also 1m lower than the ground level to the north of the house but the level is continued flush towards the east. This level is marked by slight projecting lines on the walls to both sides of the kitchen in its northern area. Under the stairs this level is continued as a crude wall which underpins the timber-framed bay. This survey has considered whether the paired doorways in the Hall 'cross passage' were viable doorways or a mock Tudor creation added as part of later efforts to create a medieval atmosphere. The former is most likely as these doorways and the two opposing cross passage entrances, as well as the Hall fireplace, have an identical moulding pattern suggesting that they are a comprehensive and contemporary suite. With the current floor level in the kitchen the right hand doorway could not function without a set of stairs however this doorway is aligned with the stairs down to the west range cellar and it would not be possible to have both at the same time. It can be hypothesised that the original ground floor level in the north-west corner of the house was a continuation of the level now remaining in the Winter Parlour however this interpretation, while satisfying some of the internal discrepancies in this area, is not reflected on the external elevation to the courtyard where the external wall is carried past this level and down to the Pebble Court. This problem with matching the ground levels at each side of the house was also addressed in the construction of the west range where the Hall floor, while level to the west, is 1m higher than in the Pebble Court, requiring the eastern doorway to be accessed by a stair. It is possible therefore that the original farmhouse also contended with an eastward slope, having the floor levels flush to the west and with lower external walls to the east. That the courtyard was not fully enclosed until the late 16th or early 17th century raises the question of how the change in level between the farmhouse and east range was accounted for prior to the creation of the yard and to what degree the area was levelled or changed once the yard was fully enclosed.

The Hall fireplace is served by a discreet brick chimney at the edge of the roof and which truncates one of the Long Gallery windows. It is probable that the vertical marks visible on the courtyard elevation mark the position of a former external chimney and this was removed in the early 18th century to enable the creation of the symmetrical western range since it would have projected up over the roof line. This survey has seen no evidence to prove or disprove the possibility of a former projecting porch to the Green Court.

The Long Gallery was formerly accessed by a central doorway through the Tapestry Room suggesting that it was at least in part open. This appears to be supported by the claim that fragments of painted decoration were found during conservation across the east wall though it has not been possible to verify this (NT 1998). The three transverse planks in the gallery floor which have been suggested as marking former partitions were determined as being unrelated to former partitioning, though the marks of a possible early partition arrangement were identified on the floor boards at the north end of the gallery. The current central stud wall is a later insertion, likely early 17th century and corresponding with creation of the Great Stair. The partitions separating the three rooms appear to post-date the central longitudinal wall and viewed in plan there is a thickening of the central wall associated with the position of the rooms. While the fireplace to the Nursery is likely 18th century, the fire opening to Alice's Room and the former fire opening to the WC may be 19th century in date since it seems unlikely that Edward would spoil his symmetrical façade with the two chimneys required by these fireplaces.

Externally, the west range, tower house, and farmhouse were unified under a brick façade though this was confined to the main views, leaving the less publically visible walls with stone facing. Since the H-plan house arrived at by John Dryden is a multi-phase structure, it is unclear if each building was individually faced in brick, or if the brick facing was added once the overall plan form was completed. Some confusion with phasing arises when considering the relationship between the west range and the single bay extension to Wylkyns Farm which formed the present Kitchen footprint. Both parts of the building share a common roof suggesting that the two were part of the same phase of construction, however this interpretation is contradicted by some external evidence; for example the discrepancy in the eaves line to the courtyard and the awkwardly placed windows in the north-west corner of the courtyard.

Building materials

Canons Ashby provides a very early example of the use of brick in Northamptonshire and this was an expensive building material which at this period would have required either the importation of the bricks at great expense, or the excavation of brick kilns specifically for this particular building project. The production of the bricks would have required the employment of a specialist brick-maker, likely from London and again would represent a fairly significant cost. There is very little physical evidence for early brick making in the county and no seventeenth century or earlier kilns are known, though the early to mid 16th-century Dower House at Fawsley suggests that brick making was taking place in the county (Atkins 2002, 95). It has been suggested that in the 17th-century bricklaying and brickmaking were distinct crafts, and as such the laying of the bricks would have presented another cost to the project in addition to the significant costs for the manufacture and transportation of the material (Campbell and Saint 2002).

The use of bricks was commonplace during the Roman period but brick making ceased with the departure of the Romans and did not experience resurgence in England until the 14th and 15th centuries. Even then its use was confined to buildings of importance such as churches, colleges and large houses such as Tattershall Castle (1434-48) or the gate-tower of Oxburgh Hall (1482).

> With the advent of the Tudors brick-making made rapid advances both in skill and in popularity, so much so in fact that the reign of Henry VIII may justly be termed the first great age of English brickwork... Socially this material was now in such high favour that both Wolsey and a few years later the King himself were perfectly happy to have their palaces at Hampton Court and St James's constructed of it (Clifton-Taylor 1987, 217).

Despite the rise in popularity of brick, its use was limited by geography, the cost of fuel required for brick kilns, and the overall cost of its manufacture or importation left the material outside of the reach of the ordinary builder. By the mid 17th century, brick saw increased use in the London houses of the mercantile and professional classes and towards the end of the 17th century saw increased use in ordinary houses. John Morton, writing in the early 18th century, listed a number of brick pits yielding clays of variable composition and hue including at Clipston, Kettering, Wellingborough, Castle Ashby and Daventry, and notes that "at or near most of our great towns there are pits affording a very good sort of brick clay" (Morton 1712, 70). As can be seen at many of the county's large halls and houses of the 16th and early 17th century, such as at Kirby, Holdenby, Lyveden New Bield and Castle Ashby, stone and ashlar remained the common building and facing material. The use of brick however may not have been thought of as a complementary facing material for the Classical styling of those buildings. Its use at Canons Ashby was likely a deliberate statement since good building stone was in plentiful supply.

The use of expensive or imported materials was also noted on the tower windows which, it has been suggested, were framed with clunch, a not uncommon building stone in England, which, while relatively soft and vulnerable to erosion, allows for the creation of intricate carvings. That this material would have been imported from outside of the county, probably from Cambridgeshire, or perhaps from Bedfordshire or Buckinghamshire, again points to the expenditure of the project. Likewise, the panelling of the Winter Parlour, instead of being made from oak as was common at this period, was instead made from a more exotic wood type, perhaps walnut, fruitwood or an imported mahogany species.

Plan form

In the medieval period, the common house façade and plan form showed little attempt at uniformity or symmetry and this was in part due to the asymmetric layout of hall, flanking parlour and services and the off-centre cross-passage which prohibited a symmetrical arrangement of the external elements. The increasing influence of the Renaissance provided an impetus for the house form to move away from the unplanned and functional form of the medieval period towards one in which the ideas of symmetry and aesthetic design increasingly held sway. “The rambling functionalism of medieval planning was giving way to the stricter Renaissance symmetry (Steane 1974, 201).”

In post-medieval domestic planning the H-plan house form was the result of a rearrangement of the domestic layout which while retaining the hall and cross passage, and flanking service and accommodation, diluted and balanced these rooms in order to produce a symmetrical arrangement with the hall at the centre acting as a communal area. This arrangement was achieved by decreasing the emphasis on the hall and reducing or removing the cross passage, resulting in a more uniform division of the house and allowing for a symmetrical arrangement of fenestration. An expectation for privacy and comfort led to the creation of greater numbers of parlours and specialist rooms which were often larger than the hall and which were provided with heating, plaster ceilings, panelling and tapestries. As well as satisfying the desire for a symmetrical house on which fashionable conceits could be applied, the H-plan house, in contrast to other plan forms such as the courtyard and E-plan, provided advantages to building cost, since it was more compact, thus requiring less building material for walling, particularly expensive facing materials. The centralisation of the wings also reduced the need for long corridors and brought rooms in closer proximity to stair cases, thus providing more efficient circulation through the house.

> "In architecture, the need for symmetry became such an obsession in some quarters that it dictated changes in living conditions as well as absurdities in

> detail. Behind a window which was necessary for the sake of a symmetrical facade, a fireplace might be disguised; and because a newel staircase in a corner or turret was inconvenient for symmetry, 'grand staircases' were built in great halls, turning them into entrance halls instead of common rooms. Servants were thus relegated to the backs of houses with access by the newly invented 'back stairs" (Bailey 1983, 132).

Some sense of the finished form and appearance of John Dryden's house is provided by the main facade of Plaish Hall, Shropshire (mid 16th century) which is an H-plan house in red brick comprising projecting end gables with a mix of arched cavetto mullion and square ovolo mullion windows, and a central wall with small off-centre cross-passage entranceway. At the sides of both wings are external chimney stacks crowned with decorative brick chimney flues.

The retention of some elements of medieval plan form was in part also related to a desire to maintain and express links to tradition and heritage and this was especially important in the context of upward social mobility. Despite the widespread adoption of imported Classical motifs which were generally seen as little more than conceits and novelty to be discarded with changes in fashion, the balance between fashion and tradition persisted even into the 18th century where, even as he imposed a baroque facade on the house, Edward Dryden placed the motto 'Antient as the Druids' in the Drawing Room and hung arms and armour in the Hall.

East Range

The eastern range, more than any other part of the building conforms with the local vernacular tradition, displaying characteristic features which are common in 17th and 18th-century yeoman houses and small cottages of Northamptonshire and Banbury.

The east elevation exhibits a clear vertical join adjacent to the courtyard passageway, suggesting that the east range was expanded northward though the dating of such work is unclear. This is not however evident on the west courtyard-facing elevation which provides a uniform and consistent appearance with no obvious signs of alteration. The roof structure comprises a series of principal rafter / raised cruck trusses with the purlins either threaded through the trusses or carried over the back of the principals. It was only possible in one instance to examine the joining of the truss to the wall where it was revealed that the truss feet were embedded in the wall, descending to first floor level and joining a tie beam. This is likely the case for several of the other trusses but could not be confirmed with certainty.

A study by this author of buildings in the village of Flore revealed that the majority of the houses, including small cob cottages and larger stone built houses utilised principal rafter trusses often rising from mid-first floor level where the truss feet were embedded in the outer walls and sometimes joined by collars at floor level (Bassir 2017). In several instances the principals had waney edges either retaining bark or showing the irregularity of the branch. The distinction between raised cruck and principal rafter appears to be a blurred one and while several of the principal rafters showed little or no curve towards the feet, others were clearly halved pairs displaying a basal curve. Such variation is not surprising since the builders were often working with hedgerow trees of variable quality and were not perhaps in a position to choose branches of the ideal shape and section. In many instances the common rafters were no more than branches, either halved or whole, and retained bark. It was noted also that in the majority of the roofs examined the purlins were carried on the back of the principals and at the apex the principals were lapped and pegged leaving a cross in which to carry the ridge piece. A study by Wood-Jones of domestic architecture of the Banbury region identified the principal rafter truss as the common roof support in the 17th and 18th century, appearing to represent an evolution from the cruck truss. The better

quality of joinery evident in the east range roof of Canons Ashby is likely due to the wider availability of good building timber prior to the 17th century and the financial means to afford a better quality of work.

In Northamptonshire the principal rafter truss or raised cruck truss is often associated with cob construction and a common method of upgrading houses in the 17th and 18th century was to either re-face or rebuild cob walls in stone while retaining the roof structure *in situ*. This work could be carried out wholesale to both facades or as a staged process replacing first the main elevation and then the rear wall. Such an alteration was sometimes accompanied by the creation of upper floors in formerly single-storied dwellings. Upgrading a house rather than rebuilding it was a cost-effective solution and allowed for the occupiers to continue living in the house during the works. The rebuilding and upgrading of ancestral homes by wealthy yeoman began early in the 16th century and was taken up the lesser farmers by the end of that century (Hoskins, 1981).

The tie beams visible under the Brewhouse ceiling are an integral part of the roof frame and have moulded stops respecting the current wall lines. A common feature of walls which have been rebuilt from cob to stone is that they display an often prominent taper from floor to roof and this is not seen at Canons Ashby though this feature is not an absolute prerequisite for such an alteration. If the east range was originally built from cob, the re-building to stone evidently reduced the width of the original wall since it left the ends of the raised cruck tie beams exposed in the external face of the wall.

As discussed in Section 13.1, it is possible that Erasmus Dryden had intended to complete his expansion works by rebuilding the east range to match his new north-east and south-east wings but either due to finance or time this work was not carried out. It may be therefore that he opted for the less costly means of matching the earlier cob range with the new ranges by rebuilding the walls in stone whilst retaining the existing roof.

The interpretation of the phasing in this area is made problematic by the ground and first floor windows in the north-east corner of Pebble Court which are located immediately adjacent to the join of the north and east ranges, suggesting that the windows were already in place when the east range was altered, something which contradicts the east elevation where the gable is keyed into the stonework of the east range, though as will be discussed in Section 14.3 this gable may have been re-faced in the early 18th century.

A seemingly full height partition was identified roughly central to the east range and positioned between the chimney and passageway. This comprised a principal rafter truss at its upper parts with collars spanning between the walls at the lower level and showing defunct mortices for former wall studs. In the Brewhouse an adjacent collar at ceiling level also had mortices to the underside and both collars were formerly joined by joists suggesting a former floor level or platform. It was not possible to identify any other former partitions due to the intrusion of the later ceilings.

In most historic building traditions in England, whether timber framed or involving timber roofs set on brick or stone walls, a series of beams or ‘wall plates’ are used to spread roof loads at the eaves level. This applies to all box frame buildings and also many using cruck elements. However, there are also some regional building styles using mass walls of, stone, earth, turf and even brick that do not use wall plates, in these roofs the walls and purlins perform some of the function of a wall plate. This seems to have been the case with some of the local mud (cob or kale) and stone walled rural buildings in Northamptonshire. In the east range it was possible to see the wall plate only where the former partition was located: in the defunct space left behind the modern utility room and adjacent to the chimney breast, though even here access was very limited. In this location the stone wall had a flat top on which was laid a

squared oak beam onto which the principal rafter descended. The common rafters appear to be notched over or 'birdsmouthed' to the beam and project out a short way to provide a slight overhang for the roof surface. Due to lack of safe access it was generally not possible to examine the wall plates in the roofs at Canons Ashby and further investigations at the house may benefit from trying to clarify this aspect of the construction.

The raw materials, conversion methods, and framing of the east range roof are typical of the 16th to 18th centuries; the mixed use of raised crucks places the construction in the earlier part of that date range and would support a 16th-century origin for the building. However these trusses are joined into tie beams which carry the upper floor as an integral part of the frame, suggesting that the building was constructed with an upper floor, though the joists could not be examined to confirm if they were part of the original construction or added later. The use of wall plates with notched and projecting joists appears to be a 17th-century development in roof framing (Wood-Jones 1963, 232) and it is likely that these were added when the structure was rebuilt from cob to stone. It is clear that the roof has been re-contoured by the addition of new rafters, multiple furring pieces and raised ridge pieces and this work may have been required to mitigate frame subsidence following the rebuilding of the walls.

The ground floor rooms are significantly taller than the first floor rooms and the underside of some of the collars bear lath and plaster marks indicating that the first floor rooms formerly had higher ceilings which were reduced to create the current room configuration. Part of this work may have been as a result of the joining of the east and south ranges. When viewed in longitudinal section there is a clear disconnect in floor levels where the two ranges meet, with the southernmost bay of the east range being raised to match the floor levels in the south range. The root of this alteration appears to have been the creation of the passageway into the south range cellar (Room C1). Since the east range was built without cellars the rooms are built at external ground level while those of the south range are raised *c*0.8m above the ground to allow for light wells into the cellar. In order to provide access from the north the ground floor level had to be raised in the southern bay of the east range and this was accompanied by the raising of the overlying levels with doors awkwardly inserted into the corners of the south east rooms. Since the current floor levels across the south range were created during the 1710 alterations, the changes at the south end of the range were likely carried out at the same time.

It is interesting that the Hall cross-passage is aligned with the passageway through the eastern range since ostensibly the east range pre-dates the west range. This alignment of passage and doorways is not uncommon in courtyard plan houses where it was a deliberate novelty providing visual interest to the house and adding a touch of the dramatic. This feature raises the question of whether there was an existing passageway in the east range prior to the construction of the west range or if one was added when the hall was built and deliberately aligned to provide a line of sight through the house.

14.2. Phase 2, late 16th – early 17th century

South-east wing

John Dryden died in 1584 and the expansion of the house was continued by his son Erasmus, 1st Bt. who inherited an H-plan house and a separate eastern range and set about joining these two buildings to create a courtyard plan house. In order to achieve this, the builders faced the same challenges as those who built the west range, namely the need to unite separate buildings which were not intended to be joined and which presented variable floor, ceiling and roof levels and rooms of differing proportions.

As noted in Section 6.3 the two parts of the south-east block do not form a uniform range, instead showing a misalignment of the north wall where the building meets the east range. This misalignment is carried through the full height of the building from cellar to roof and can be seen internally and externally. Between the two parts of the building is an unusual stone gable which overlies timber stud partitions in Spenser's Room and Painted Parlour, which in turn are carried on a stone wall in the basement. The gable is plastered on one side and any interpretation of the developmental sequence in the south range must account for this anomalous feature.

Interpretation of the area is complicated in that it seems possible that the east range may have formerly projected further south of its current position and was truncated back to allow for the expansion of the south range. This survey proposes two possible solutions to account for the misalignment in the building and associated internal features. The first suggests that the current arrangement is the result of a two-phased construction in which the first phase comprised the expansion of the south range to meet the east range, and the second phase resulted in the partial cutting back and re-building of the east range to allow for the south range to be carried through to its present position. The second proposal is that the south range was expanded in a single phase but was deliberately wrapped around the east range, producing the misalignment of the north wall. The current chimney and gable is clearly built to serve the south range and has fire openings only to the south. It has been noted however that chimneys often act as anchor points to later development and it is possible that the position of the current chimney and gable was dictated by a pre-existing chimney, perhaps located in an end gable position to the east range and that the misalignment of the north wall is an attempt to incorporate an existing chimney stack.

It is significant that the southernmost surviving truss of the east range roof is held within the cross-gable between the east and south ranges as it may support the notion that the east range extended further south than its current extent and was truncated back to allow the expansion of the south range. There is no clear original terminus at either end of the east range and the external east elevation clearly shows that the east range was partly rebuilt or refaced when the south range was built. The misalignment of the south range wall may also have been a deliberate way of retaining this truss and thus avoid impacting on the east range roof. This however seems a significant effort when it might have sufficed to remove the truss and carry the purlin ends in the new gable wall.

The RCHM description of the house proposes that the earliest part of Canons Ashby, predating the construction of the tower house, was the eastern end of the south range and the adjacent eastern range (Heward and Taylor 1996, 115). It further suggests that remains of a former truss survive in the present west wall of Spenser's Room and that this early roof was removed when the range was raised. It is not clear to what truss remains this description refers, except perhaps the cambered tie beam though this would appear self-contradictory since any truss positioned on that beam would be level with the present roof and above any raising of the range. This survey has seen no evidence to indicate that the Spenser Room partition is part of a continuation of the

eastern range; the tie beam at the base of the partition is not level with the floor level across the eastern range and the cambered beam is almost level with the top of the east range roof and it would not be possible for the two ranges to be joined at this level.

The presence of what appears to be a window in the stone gable over the Spenser's Room wall with possible glazing groove in the sill and plastering of its western side would support a two-phased build since this window presents evidence for having been an external feature. Explaining the presence of a stone gable over a timber-stud wall is problematic and a satisfactory solution has not presented itself. At the north end of the east range a timber stud wall was built at the join to the north range and it is likely that it was the intention of Erasmus to complete the house by re-building the east range to match the new flanking ranges. The northern timber stud wall was likely a temporary measure to seal the north range until work on a new east range could begin. Is it possible therefore that the unusual arrangement between the two parts of the south-east range is the result of making good a temporary end wall between the two phases of construction? The Spenser's Room wall does not appear to have ever been an external one; the doorframe appears to be an integral part of the wall frame rather than a later insertion and the tie beam at floor level has a good join for an eastward projecting bridging beam.

It has been suggested that the current chimney piece was added by Erasmus Dryden in the 1590s and the ceiling by John Dryden 2nd Bt in the 1630s. However the chimney piece and fireplace within respect the current floor level which was lowered as evident by defunct floor boards surviving in the blocked doorway of the Spenser Room partition wall. Erasmus inherited the house in 1584 and died in 1632 having been master of the house for 48 years. If he built the chimney piece then he would have first had to have built the south-east wing with a higher floor and then subsequently lowered the floor to allow for a new chimney, at the same time either creating an awkward step between the Drawing Room and Spenser's Room or blocking this door and inserting the current one. Since the earlier doorway serves both rooms such a sequence appears unlikely, particularly if the fireplace dates to the 1590s, and would appear to negate a two-phased construction of the south-east wing. A possible explanation might be to suggest that the south-east wing is earlier than previously thought and was built by John Dryden prior to 1584. Alternatively if this wing was built by Erasmus, the chimney piece might have been added as a later phase of works by him, or was built by John Dryden 2nd Bt. A third possibility is that the chimney respected the earlier, higher floor level and was subsequently altered to match the lowered floor. When viewed in the plan the chimney is off-set from the Book Room and Drawing Room fireplaces, suggesting that it is accommodating the stairwell and therefore a later addition to the building and this would support the notion that the fireplaces were either added later by Erasmus at a later date to the initial construction of the range or were built by John 2nd Bt.

North-east wing

The north-east wing was built by Erasmus Dryden and continues the eastward expansion of the north range, enveloping the eastern range to produce an enclosed courtyard. The external join of this range to earlier expansion of Wylkyns Farm is clearly visible as a vertical line on the south wall and by a linear change in brickwork on the north elevation, also conveniently marked by a vertical rise in the string course. This was likely the higher status of the two wings and the upper room had an impressive double-arched ceiling carried on specially shaped heavy trusses. This room occupied three bays of the wing and was separate from the western bay which had a simpler principal rafter truss. Both external and internal evidence have shown that the first floor ceiling level was raised, likely in around 1710, in order to increase the prominence of the first floor Sitting Room at the expense of the second floor room where the elaborate ceiling was removed concurrent with the creation of a chimney to the Bakehouse / Laundry.

Despite this being an obviously important room there is no evidence to show how the Oriel Room was formerly heated. The current chimney appears to be a later addition, truncating the ceiling, and the only known former chimney was a small single flue built at the far corner of the room and hardly ideal for anything other than a small fireplace. Neither the north elevation, nor the courtyard elevation show any evidence for a removed external chimney. It may be possible that the current bay window replaced an external chimney similar to that serving the south-east rooms or, alternatively, if one was located at the join to the east range, its removal may account for the ad hoc joining of the two parts of the building. In Northamptonshire axial chimney stacks with back to back fireplaces generally appear from the mid-17th century as part of wider innovations and improvements to domestic planning, a good example of which is Haunt House, Weldon, *c*1636 (Steane 1974, 215).

In contrast to the Great Stair which serves the south range, the rooms in the north-east wing are accessed by a much more modest stair than might be expected for the grand room suggested by the former ceiling. Although no evidence was visible in the currently exposed fabric it may be possible that the current north stair represents a reduction of a formerly more substantial one.

The expansion of the Kitchen to its current limits may be attributed to this period and this alteration appears to have been accompanied by a lowering of the floor level in order to provide a flush floor level between the former farmhouse and the new north-eastern range. This alteration also included the reduction of the former first floor level producing the current mezzanine level. The eastward expansion of the kitchen by one bay appears to have been carried out prior to Erasmus' changes and it is therefore uncertain how this expansion affected the mezzanine level rooms. At the upper level this expansion produced the current Staff Room and likely a similar arrangement was provided at mezzanine level. The tall cross-windows to the kitchen appear to enlarge two existing windows as evident by defunct spacers in the window jambs. The creation of the Winter Parlour and expansion and alterations to the north-west stair may be attributed to this phase of works and may be concurrent with the creation of the Great Stair. If the Winter Parlour was created at this time, then it is probable that the western canted bay window was also added at the same time since it respects the altered floor levels in the Sitting Room and Winter Parlour.

14.3. Phase 3, Late 17th to early 18th century

The creation of the Great Stair has been attributed to either Erasmus or to John Dryden, 2nd Bt, though it must have undergone some later alterations in order to accommodate changes to floor level. If this stair was created by Erasmus, its replacement of the lower levels of the former spiral stair may have some implications for the stair located in the north-west part of the house, and it may be possible that some of the materials taken from the removed spiral stair were re-used in the creation of or alterations to the northern stair. The creation of this stair removed several rooms from the tower and was accompanied by a modification of fenestration. It is worth noting that despite the widespread recycling of window elements throughout the house, there are very few examples of cavetto moulded windows being recycled even though several were removed to accommodate extensions to the east and north of the tower.

The only alteration which can be positively attributed to the late 17th century was the creation of the present Drawing Room ceiling which celebrates the marriage of John Dryden, 2nd Bt. No alterations are known to have been carried out by Sir Robert Dryden in the period 1658-1708.

Although in possession of the house for only nine years, Edward Dryden was responsible for major changes to the house and these provide an interesting insight into the influences that drove building fashion during this period. Externally, the most prominent elevations at the south and west were rearranged and refaced to present symmetrical and orderly facades. The south range was completely re-faced under a unifying ashlar with fashionable sash windows added to emphasise the symmetry and regularity. The off-centre tower proved problematic to this intent and the brickwork was rendered and a new baroque style doorway inserted. The re-facing of the south range, which also included the removal of a projecting bay window, caused significant structural problems in later years as the new ashlar facing was not sufficiently bonded to the earlier fabric and this was exacerbated by the ingress of water into the walls causing them to subside and split apart.

The fenestration of the west range was modified to enhance the existing symmetry and the brickwork was rendered and possibly scored to provide an illusion of ashlar. It is probable that an external chimney serving the Hall fireplace was removed at this time as it would be visible over the roof line.

The theme of order and symmetry was also carried into the gardens where the grounds were arranged into formal gardens with paths and descending terraces surrounded by stone walls. The 18th century was nationally a period of agricultural improvement and prosperity, during which many landed families set about rebuilding and enlarging their country homes and imposing planned formality onto the landscape setting. At Boughton the late-medieval house was expanded and refaced in the style of a French chateau and a Dutch gardener was employed to create formal gardens with canals and fountains.

The reduction of the floor levels across the south range was accomplished by truncating the ends of the bridging beams and reseating them at a lower level supported on stone columns or on timber brackets. Timber rails were also added alongside several of the walls to carry the ends of the joists, this being easier than creating new joist pockets in the walls and also solving the problem of carrying joists across the cellar window openings. The floor boards were laid longitudinally to the rooms and parallel to the joists and this required battens to be notched over the joists to carry the boards. The Dining Room floor demonstrates a particularly costly and elaborate method of flooring in which unusually long boards were used spanning the full length of the room, and these were kept level by the dowels fitted into the board edges. This intricate work required significant skill and the accurate jointing is more akin to panelling than a carpenter-made floor.

The Hall was given a new floor as part of Edward Dryden's 1710 alterations and the dais was removed, creating a matching level between the west and south ranges. The west range cellar appears contemporary with the construction of the hall and ends at the join with the farmhouse. The addition of the heavy flagstone floor required greater support than that which could be provided by the original floor frame, likely oak bridging beams and joists, and brick vaults were added carry the new floor.

14.4. Phase 4, 19th century and early 20th century

The 19th century saw only minimal alterations to the house and these for the large part comprised repairs and renewal of the fenestration as well as reinstatement of several of the mullion windows which were blocked by Edward. The external privy appears to be 19th century and is included on the 19th-century plan of the house though it is unclear if it is original to the 1836 plan or to Sir Henry's amendments in 1863. The stair turret in the south-east corner of the courtyard appears to have been rearranged or renewed in the 19th century and the short angled corridor between the stairwell and the house office may date to this period.

On the north courtyard wall Sir Henry added a recycled Tudor door and placed a circular trefoil window adjacent. The plinth course to each side of the door may have been added at this time since it respects the new door. Further, it is evident that the ground floor windows flanking the door are set in reduced openings for which clear joins can be seen internally and this reduction may be contemporary with the addition of the plinth course.

Sir Henry removed and blocked two sash windows in the north-east gable, at the same time re-instating a mullion window and the bay windows to the Oriel and Sitting Rooms. This gable appears to have initially been fully brick-faced to match the north range but was re-faced in stone, in part during the 1710 works and later when Sir Henry rearranged the fenestration. An alternative interpretation for this gable would suggest that the brickwork around the former sashes replaces stone facing removed when the sashes were added in 1710.

1980s view of the north-east gable; note brickwork around the sashes (CANT6RED)
Fig 284

The Dryden family moved out of the house following the Second World War and the house was let from 1956. Although tenants attempted to maintain the house, the extent and seriousness of decay was too great for any piece-meal or small scale work.

> By 1980, the remaining 28 hectares if the estate were a wilderness of dead elms, docks and thistles; the garden was a jungle; the north-east range of the house was riddled with dry rot; the garden front was bowing outwards and, among other things, threatening to bring down the marvellous plasterwork ceiling of the Great Chamber; roofs were unsound; drainpipes blocked; deathwatch beetle rampant (Building 1984, 44).

Following a grant from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, Canons Ashby passed to the National Trust, and in 1981, with help from the Historic Buildings Council, the Department of the Environment, and the Landmark Trust, as well as a public appeal, a major programme of restoration, conservation and repair was implemented. The aim of the restoration programme was to return the house largely to its appearance in the 1921 Country Life photographs. This programme, implemented under the John Osbourne Partnership, required the stabilisation and underpinning of external walls and the partial taking down and re-building of the south elevation. The Drawing Room ceiling was supported with a lattice steel framework and subsidence in the tower was mitigated by underpinning in the basement and the addition of straps and supports to the main beams. The roofs throughout the house were strengthened by means of steel joists and straps. Several of the stone mullion windows had deteriorated due to water damage and parts of the frames were replaced like-for-like; similarly several of the sash windows were re-built and these can be distinguished by their small sash horns.

More recent changes to the house include the creation of Alice's Room which was wallpapered in the 19th century style and had the missing chimney flue and fireplace added to complement the restoration. In the cellars a photographic dark room was added in one of the former small ale cellars and a wine store re-created, though it is not known precisely which of the cellar rooms were formerly used for these functions.

14.5. Timeline

Pre c1550 – Wylkyns Farme, house belonging to Robert Wylkyns. May have comprised a stone-built, three storey, L-plan building with detached linear range built of cob

1550-1584 – House came into the possession of John Dryden. He first built a Tower House as a separate structure to the farmhouse and then joined the two. Modernised and perhaps rearranged the interior of the farmhouse. It is uncertain if the cellar (Larder) was already in existence or was added by John or even by Erasmus as part of later alterations in this area.

1584-1632 – Sir Erasmus Dryden, 1st Bt. Expanded the house eastwards by constructing linear wings which enveloped the existing detached cob range; the range was likely modified to accommodate this phase of works and the cob walling was re-built in stone while retaining the existing roof structure. Both of the new wings featured large upper-storey rooms with arched or barrel vaulted ceilings (a stair and fireplace to the northern wing have been lost). The Great Stair can likely be attributed to Erasmus, likewise the creation of the Winter Parlour and associated rearrangement of the adjacent stair. The expansion of the Kitchen took place as part of the same works and resulted in the loss of most of the former first floor level now called the Mezzanine. The subdivision of the first floor to the West Range, creating the Long Gallery, may be attributed to Erasmus.

1632-1658 – Sir John Dryden, 2nd Bt. Replaced the Drawing Room barrel vault with a new plasterwork ceiling which incorporated the earlier ceiling's supporting structure.

1658-1708 – Sir Robert Dryden, 3rd Bt. No alterations to the house are known to have been carried out during this period.

1708-1717 – Edward Dryden. A major phase of remodelling, both internally and externally was carried out in this short period of time. This included re-facing the south elevation and altering the fenestration of the west elevation, as well as creating a formal entrance court with gates. Several of the rooms were given new fashionable panelling and fireplaces, and the ground floor rooms of the south range were enlarged by lowering the floors. This also required alterations to the lower part of the Great Stair. The Hall was redecorated and provided with a chequerboard stone floor which removed the former dais. Several of the stone mullion windows were either blocked or replaced with sash windows. Edward appears to have altered the floor level in the north-east corner of the house to make the first floor rooms more prominent, and the insertion of a chimney to the Bakehouse and overlying rooms required the removal of the former double-arched ceiling to the Oriel Room. A former stair and chimney to the Oriel Room may have been lost during this phase of works; the bay window to the Oriel Room was likely added at this time.

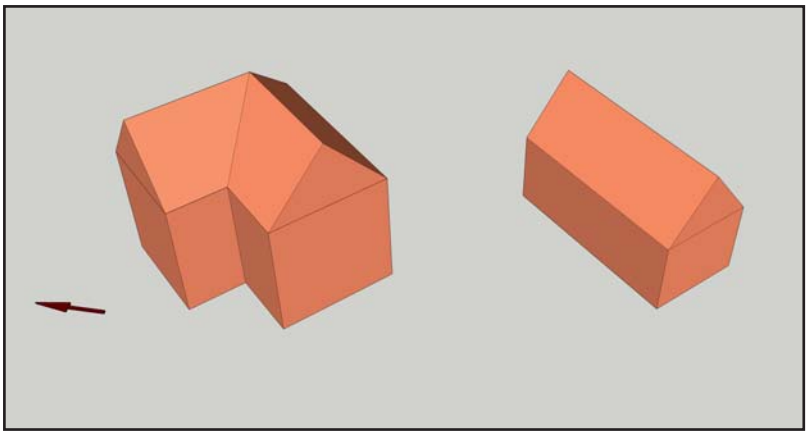
1717-1770 – Sir John Dryden, 7th Bt. The only known alteration by Sir John is the addition of a Rococo ceiling in Spenser's Room which had previously been panelled by Edward.

No alterations of note were carried out between 1770 and 1837 though The Rev. Sir Henry commissioned designs for remodelling the east range in the neo-Gothic style and expanding the building into the central courtyard.

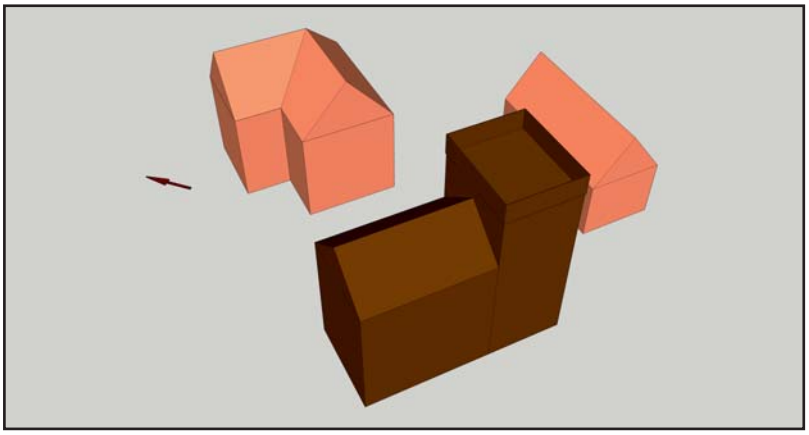
1837-1899 – Sir Henry Dryden, the Antiquary. Sir Henry re-opened several of the blocked windows and repaired several of the sash windows and chimneys. The external privy and dormer window and projecting passageway to the Dressing Room may date to this time.

1899-1938 – Sir Alfred Dryden and Sir Arthur Dryden. Some repairs undertaken under the supervision of the architect J. A. Gotch in 1906. From 1938 the house was generally unoccupied and fell into disrepair including dry-rot, deathwatch beetle, susbsidence of walls, ingress of water and unsound roofs.

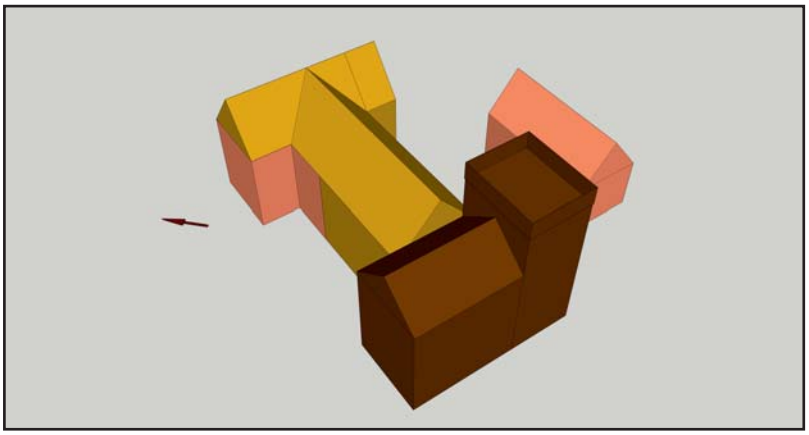
1950s to present - From 1962 the house was let out and some restoration work was undertaken but by 1980 the structural problems were too great and required significant intervention to address. Following a grant from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, Canons Ashby passed to the National Trust, and in 1981, with help from the Historic Buildings Council, the Department of the Environment, and the Landmark Trust, as well as a public appeal, a major programme of restoration, conservation and repair was implemented.



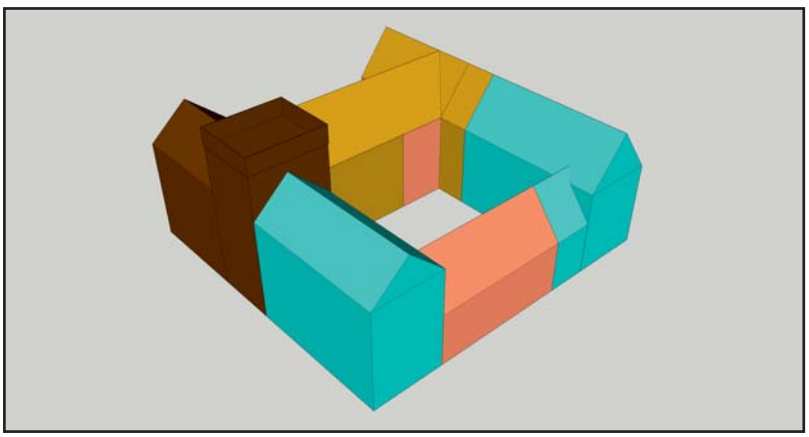
Wylkyns Farm, farmhouse with detached building



New Tower House by John Dryden



Tower House joined to the farm house which was extended one bay



Two new wings added, detached building likely rebuilt in stone and modified to fit new ranges

15 CONCLUSION

Canons Ashby is a fine example of post-medieval high status domestic architecture, and blurs the distinctions between the Northamptonshire vernacular, gentry house, and Tudor prodigy house, taking influence from each of these to leave a modest but uniquely interesting property which, as described by Gotch, is less than a palace, and more than a manor house. The development of the house reflects the wider changes in architectural history, both locally and nationally, as well as changes in artistic fashion and building methods, sometimes acting as the forerunner to regional trends while at other times lagging behind.

The general approach to the alterations at Canons Ashby, particularly in later generations, has been aptly described as trying to achieve maximum effect for the minimum interference (Barber 2018). It is this character of recycling and transformation which makes interpretation of the building's development particularly difficult as everywhere one is faced with ad-hoc arrangements of stone and timber which provide the illusion of solid construction but hide the underlying compromises.

The initial phase of building by John Dryden appears to have been carried out at great expense and was a deliberate statement of material wealth. The addition of the tower may have also been a deliberate public expression of his northern heritage, and this also appears to have been expressed in the interior decorative scheme such as on the painted panelling, later re-set in the Winter Parlour.

Erasmus' building efforts were likewise fairly ambitious in scope and represented a major building project but it is likely that the practicalities of the work and lack of financial resources prevented him from fully realising his ambitions, forcing a comprise at the eastern range which instead of being taken down and re-built to match the new wings, was re-built from cob to stone, retaining the existing roof structure. Internally his efforts were quite successful, producing the impressive Great Stair, the slightly old fashioned chimney piece of the Drawing Room and an unusual double arched ceiling to the Oriel Room. The alterations to the north-western area of the house focused on the creation of the Winter Parlour and the expansion of the Kitchen, both requiring the truncation of existing rooms and causing the disconnection of the former first floor level. This work, coupled with the expansion and rearrangement of the stair, produced a complicated and ad hoc arrangement of recycled and truncated timberwork in the north-west part of the house.

The last major phase of building was undertaken by Edward Dryden in around 1710 and this work also incorporated the surrounding gardens which were terraced and re-ordered to create a unified setting for the house. Despite his attempts to create uniform and orderly facades, the nature of the house itself, particularly the off-centre tower, forced compromise on the construction which only significant intervention and partial demolition and reconstruction could have overcome. Edward appears to have gone to a reasonable expense during his works as evidenced by the well-made and costly floor in the Dining Room, and the high quality of the panelling added throughout the house.

The impetus to update the house did not end with Edward's semi-successful baroque facades, but as seen by drawings and correspondence from the early 19th century consideration was given to recasting the house once again, this time giving the east range a neo-Gothic facade. It would be interesting to see how this treatment would have been integrated with the orderly 18th century elevation at the south and the disorderly brick elevation of the north but these plans did not progress beyond the drawing board due to the financial cost of the project.

The structural and framing timbers show an unusual degree of experimentation, with several unusual roofing forms present in the house. The typical roof truss utilised heavy principal rafters as was common in the region where this form developed from

the raised cruck, however the framing methods are variable in different parts of the house such as in the west range where the trusses are reduced at the apex, or over the Tapestry Room where the principals were joined by three collars. To frame the double arched Oriel Room ceiling, bespoke shaped trusses were used, again based on the heavy principal rafter but with shaped collars and secondary supports to carry the ceiling frame. A number of the bridging beams utilised paired mortices to house deep double tenoned joists and the primary joist framing method was the soffit tenon with diminished haunch which has been described as the ultimate joist end joint and is suggestive of a good degree of competence in the craftsmen employed for the earlier phases of work. This use of good craftsmanship also extended to the later periods as noted in the high quality of joinery in the Dining Room floor. This however is in stark contrast to the poor quality of the construction elsewhere in the house, particularly where major constructional elements were joined and these areas of poor work were hidden behind studwork and plaster, or as noted in the north-east Sitting Room, hidden behind panelling.

This survey does not provide a complete and conclusive assessment of the building's development, and the evidence presented in this report may be interpreted in various ways. The extent of the survey was limited to accessible areas and the visible fabric, and archaeological attendance during any future works to the house would be invaluable for providing more detail to the record. A useful focus for future investigation might be during the lifting of floor boards, particularly at the first floor levels, in order to record the joist and beam arrangements, and in the roofs where the removal of the current insulation material would much better expose the joist arrangements and the wall plates which were largely inaccessible to this survey. The production of a detailed plan of the roofs was beyond the scope of this survey and would be a useful tool for better understanding of the building. Specialist surveys such as dendrochronology may clarify certain aspects of the phasing and development and could provide exact dating rather than the current comparative phasing.

16 Glossary

Arris - The edge or corner at the meeting of two planes.

Brick stretcher / header – The long side of a brick is called a Stretcher the end face is the Header.

Brick shiner - Refers to the orientation of bricks in a wall: A brick laid on its long narrow edge and with the broad face of the brick exposed to view.

Bridging Beam - A floor timber which spans between opposing walls and supports the ends of floor joists.

Bridled Scarf Joint - A variation of the scarf joint in which a tenon projecting from one member engages with a mortice in the other. The joint may be strengthened with pegs.

Boxed heart beam - The squared heart centre of a timber cut out from a log during the conversion process.

Canted bay - A bay window with angled sides.

Carpenter's Mark / Assembly Mark - Symbols cut, scratched, or chiselled into the members of a timber frame to assist in its correct assembly.

Cavetto / Hollow moulding - A moulding in which the sides of a linear element have a convex, rounded profile towards a central spine.

Chamfer moulding - A moulding in which the sides of a linear element are angled inward to the centre.

Cleat - A block of wood attached to the back of another; often used to fix or support purlins over the back of roof trusses.

Cob - A common vernacular construction method in which walls are formed from a mixture of mud, clay, and straw. In Northamptonshire cob may also be referred as Mud or Kale.

Cruck - Paired timbers rising from or near the ground and meeting at the roof apex.

Epicormic shoot - An epicormics sprout or shoot is new growth which emerges from an epicormic bud on the branch of a tree.

Furring / Firring Piece - Pieces or lengths of timber fixed to rafters, joists, or purlins to provide a common level or to repair a sagging roof line.

Garret - A room contained in the roof space of a house, often used as servants' accommodation. In Northamptonshire many such rooms historically provided accommodation for farm hands and labourers.

Haunched Soffit Tenon - The tenon is located at the lower edge (soffit) of a timber and the shoulder is cut at an angle to strengthen the joint. The mortice has a matching angled cut-away.

Joist - Horizontal timbers supporting floor boards.

Mortice and Tenon - A joint in which the end of one timber, the tenon, is cut away at the correct proportions and depth to fit a slot in another timber, the mortice. The joint is often strengthened by means of a peg.

Mullion - Vertical window dividing members.

Ovolo moulding - A common window moulding in which the mullion has a convex, rounded design, often with a raised central spine.

Principal Rafter - Heavy timber members or blades rising from a wall plate or seated within a solid wall and rising to the roof apex.

Purlin Longitudinal roof framing members supporting the common rafters.

Rafter / Common Rafter - Inclined roof framing members which define the slope of a roof.

Raised Cruck - Cruck blades rising from part way up a solid wall.

Scarf joint - Used to join longitudinal members made of several pieces and enables a uniform cross section to be maintained.

Stops / Chamfer and stop - Cut detail at the terminus of a chamfered beam edge.

Tie beam - Beams laid across a building to tie opposing walls together.

Transom - Horizontal window dividing members.

Truss - A set of framed timbers supporting purlins and common rafters.

Vice / Spiral Stair - A stair in which the treads radiate from a central newel post.

Wall Plate - A length of timber running horizontally along the top of a wall to receive the end of roof trusses or rafters.

Wane / Waney - A piece of timber on which the edges or outer surface retains bark or sapwood.

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CANT31RED *The south-east corner of the Book Room with panelling removed,* Canons Ashby Restoration Slides

CANT35RED View along the south-east parapet with leadwork removed, Canons Ashby Restoration Slides

CANT72BLK *View of the Tapestry Room,* Canons Ashby Restoration Slides

CANT33BLK *View of the wall between the Tower landing and Dining Room*, Canons Ashby Restoration Slides

CANT34BLK *View of garderobe chute in south Tower wall*, Canons Ashby Restoration Slides

CANT40BLK *View of the former barrel vault ceiling,* Canons Ashby Restoration Slides

CANT47BLK *View of the courtyard from the tower,* Canons Ashby Restoration Slides

CANT28GN *Spenser's Room, looking north,* Canons Ashby Restoration Slides

CANT29GN *The Great Stair*, v*iew of the first floor stair landing,* Canons Ashby Restoration Slides

CANT30GN *View of the Dining Room with panelling removed,* Canons Ashby Restoration Slides

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