SANDON BURY FARM, SANDON, HERTFORDSHIRE

NGR REF: TL 32271 34457



HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING LEVEL 3

(OASIS NR: independ1-367704)

SEPTEMBER 2019

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Summary

A historic building recording was conducted by Independent Archaeology Consultants at Sandon Bury Farm, Sandon, Hertfordshire in September 2019. The building recording revealed much information about a former dovecote and coach house, that were both located within the farm complex. Both buildings are thought to be of 17th century date. The outer brick walls of the two structures were studied together with preserved inner wooden structures such as doors, windows and roof beams. A number of secondary alterations of the two buildings were also recorded.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A historic building recording was conducted at Sandon Bury Farm, Sandon, Hertfordshire (NGR: TL 32271 34457) (Figures 1-3) in accordance with Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practise (Historic England 2016) and Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures (CIfA 2014) as well as discussions with Dr Simon Wood, Archaeological Officer at Hertfordshire County Council.
- 1.2 Independent Archaeology Consultants is an archaeological consultancy company based in Peterborough, Cambridgeshire. The company subscribes to the *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2014). All relevant CIfA Codes of Practice were adhered to throughout the course of the project.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Planning Permission has been granted (18/00584/FP) for a new development at Sandon Bury Farm, Sandon, Hertfordshire. The proposed development entailed the rebuilding of Sandon Bury Farm to provide an events venue and guest accommodation, comprising demolition of existing modern buildings within the Sandon Bury Farm complex, change of use of existing buildings from agricultural uses to an events venue and alterations to listed and non-listed buildings.
- 2.2 The whole site comprised an area of approximately 4 hectares at an average height of *c*. 160m AOD. The proposed development site was located in the village of Sandon and the geology of the site comprised glaciofluvial deposits of sand and gravel over Chalk deposits (British Geological Survey).
- 2.3 The site was situated within an area of archaeological significance, as defined by the Hertfordshire County Council HER. Therefore, an archaeological stripping of overbureden and a historic building recording project was required prior to any construction within the site. This condition was mentioned in the Planning Permission granted by North Hertfordshire District Council.

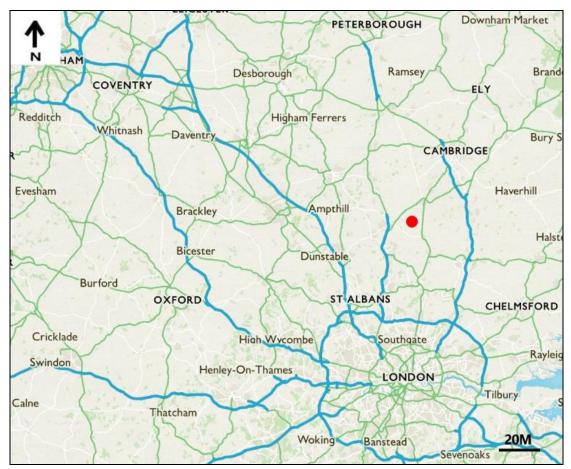


Figure 1. Location of Sandon in England. (Ordnance Survey Licence Nr 0100031673)



Figure 2. Location of Sandon in Hertfordshire.

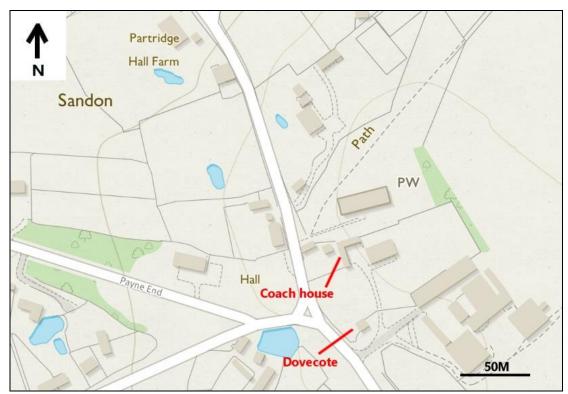


Figure 3. The location of the dovecote and coach house at Sandon Bury Farm.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The proposed development site was located within the village of Sandon in Hertfordshire. The Sandon Bury Farm complex is located in an area which used to contain a medieval manor house, and the still existing Black Barn contains a wooden structure which has been dendro dated to the mid-13th century.
- 3.2 There were in total 23 entries in the local HER-archive for Sandon Bury Farm. A number of archaeological investigations have also been carried out in the area in recent years.
- 3.3 Within the farm complex there was for instance the 17th century brick dovecote (MHT6297) and the 17th century coach house (MHT13034), which were both closely studied as a part of the Historic Building Recording programme described in this report. At the farm complex was also a pond of uncertain age (MHT17393). Another pond (MHT31062) at Rushden Road has proved to contain medieval pottery in its upper fills.
- 3.4 The medieval village of Sandon is centred on the coordinate TL 322 345 and was recorded as "Sandone" in the Domesdays Book (MHT2704). North of Sandon Bury Farm was the old village church of St All Saints (MHT4319). The church has a 14th century chancel, nave and aisle and an early 15th century west tower. The tower was buttressed in the 17th century and the building was

- restored during both the 19th and the 20th century. Features included a 14th century windows and Easter Sepulchre and a 15th century chancel screen.
- 3.5 Some 150m northwest of the Sandon Bury Farm complex was an old building named "Old Sextons". This structure was built in the mid-16th century, and was jettied on both long walls and to the west. In the 18th century the present staircase was built and the chimney-stack was relocated and rebuilt in brick. (MHT15944). In the same area was also a 17th century house, reportedly used as a forge in the past (MHT17394).
- 3.6 A little bit further away from Sandon Bury Farm, about 250m northwest of the farm complex, was also a group of medieval earthworks located (MHT4230). These are possibly associated with the medieval manor house of Sandon.
- 3.7 The Post-medieval, but heavily remodelled, farmstead of Partridge Hall Farm (MHT11048) was located some 350m northwest of Sandon Bury Farm.
- 3.8 Another Post-medieval house was once located at Dark Lane some 500m west of Sandon Bury Farm, but was entirely demolished in the early 20th century (MHT16233).
- 3.9 A medieval moated site also existed at Danyells Farm, some 250m south of Sandon Bury Farm (MHT1933). Here was also an old timber framed barn located (MHT15019).
- 3.10 Some 500m south of Sandon Bury Farm was also once located a row of tiny Post-medieval cottages in an isolated position (MHT17868).
- 3.11 There was also evidence for earlier human activity in the area. A Roman coin has for instance been found some 300m northeast of Sandon Bury Farm (MHT1740).
- 3.12 Further evidence of Roman activity had been identified some 500m east of Sandon Bury Farm, where a Roman glazed faience bead of the melon type was discovered in a field (MHT1501).
- 3.13 A number of archaeological investigations have also been carried out in the area in recent years: A Watching Brief was carried out at Danyells Farm in 2010, but recorded nothing of archaeological significance (Jones 2010).
- 3.14 An archaeological evaluation was also carried at 4 Rushden Road, Sandon, by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd in 2010. One trial trench and one geotechnical test pit were excavated. A single feature interpreted as root disturbance was recorded in the evaluation trench. One residual piece of struck flint was recovered from the fill of this feature (Haslam 2010).
- 3.15 Another archaeological evaluation was carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd at The Forge, Rushden Road, Sandon in 2011. Three

evaluation trenches were opened up within the garden at The Forge, between the standing buildings before demolition of three of them. A pond was found to have been previously much larger. There were otherwise no archaeological features or deposits present in the trenches. The topsoil overlay silty clay subsoil, which in turn overlay gravelly clay natural (Hinman 2011).

3.16 Monitoring of groundworks was also carried out by Albion Archaeology at All Saints Church in 2017. The works consisted of the replacement of base timbers in the nave, but nothing of archaeological interest was revealed.

4 AIMS

- 4.1 The aims of the historic building recording were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:
 - Gain information about the heritage assets of the former dovecote and coach house;
 - Provide detailed information regarding the date, character, extent, integrity and degree of preservation of the identified heritage assets;
 - Inform a strategy for the recording, preservation and/or management of the identified assets;
 - mitigate potential threats;
 - Define the sequence and character of activity in the buildings, as reflected by the documented features;
 - Interpret the buildings within their local, regional, and national, archaeological context.
- 4.2 The project also considered the general investigative themes outlined by: Medlycott, M. 2011 (ed.) Research and Archaeology Revisited: a Revised Framework for the East of England, East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 24; Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties (Glazebrook 1997; Brown & Glazebrook 2000), English Heritage Archaeology Division Research Agenda (1997); Discovering the Past, Shaping the Future: Research Strategy 2005 2010 (English Heritage 2005).
- 4.3 Specifically, the following investigative aims were accommodated in the programme of archaeological work:

^{*}characterisation of the site in the broader landscape;

^{*}characterisation of the activities identified on the site;

^{*}characterisation of changes affecting land-use through time

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Building Recording

The archaeological programme included the production of a LEVEL 3 illustrated historic building record (HBR). The work followed the requirements for a Level 3 documentation project. This included a full photographic documentation and an adequate survey of the standing structures prior to their alterations. The historic building recording program complied with the 2016 Historic England document *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practise*. The following elements of recording were carried out:

- **-Drawn Record:** Sketched Plans, Elevation Drawings and more Detailed Drawings of specific details.
- **-Photographic Record:** The film used for the building recording was a conventional black and white film, as well as digital photos, for inclusion in the site archive. The photographic record consisted of the following information:
- -A general view or views of the buildings in their wider setting or landscape.
- -The external appearances of the buildings. A series of oblique views to show all external elevations of the buildings, and to give an overall impression of their sizes and shapes.
- -The overall appearance of the principal rooms and circulation areas.
- -Any external or internal detail, structural or decorative, which is relevant to the design of the buildings, development and use, with photo scales where appropriate.
- -Any dates or other inscriptions; any signs, makers' plates or graffiti which contribute to the understanding of the buildings.
- -Any contents which have a significant bearing on the history of the buildings.
- -Photos of maps, drawings, views and photographs present in the buildings and illustrating their development or that of the site.
- **-The Written Record:** The recording of the buildings provided locational information, together with context descriptions, analysis and interpretation. The Written Record follows Historic England's standards and act as a complimentary source of information together with the photographic documentation of the buildings.
- -The precise location of the buildings as an address and in the form of a National Grid reference.
- -A note of any statutory designation (that is, listing, scheduling, Register of Historic Parks and Gardens, conservation area).

-A contents list; a list of illustrations or figures.

-A longer summary statement. This account summarises the forms, functions, dates and sequences of buildings. The names of architects, builders and owners will be given if known. Its purpose is to fully describe the history of the building.

The HBR of the two buildings includes schematic plans of the buildings, a photographic record of the buildings' external and internal appearances, along with any external or internal detail, relevant to the buildings' design, development or use and which does not show adequately on general photographs.

Internally, the proposal resulted in the removal or relocation of features which are important to the legibility of the circulation and to the dating of different elements. These were all recorded in their original locations, with measured drawings and/or close-up photographs showing architectural/functional detail of features to be lost/moved- ledged & braced and doors to be relocated, fireplaces removed, beams removed, including the recording of profiles, windows, staircases etc.

Removal of architectural elements and any other revealing works required to assess current constructional detail that may expose areas of historic fabric were monitored by the archaeological contractor and included within the report.

The written record includes details of the two buildings' forms, functions, dates and sequences of development. In addition, a discussion of published sources relating to the buildings' and their setting, an account of the history as given in published sources, an analysis of historic map evidence and a critical evaluation of previous records of the building, where they exist.

Drawings records dimensions and show the form or location of significant structural details (for example timber or metal framing). The written record includes a discussion of the age of these structures with consideration of the evidence to examine whether and how the dovecote is contemporary with the coach house.

The HBR overall includes a suitable level of documentary research, including consultation with HER-records, to set the results in the correct geographical, topographical, archaeological and historical context.

6 RESULTS

Written Record and Older Maps

6.1 The present main building at Sandon Bury Farm is a Grade II listed brick structure, which goes back to the mid-17th century. The manor is, however, much older and dates back to the Norman period. The exact location of the medieval manor house is unknown, but it is possible that the present building is resting on the medieval foundations.

- 6.2 The medieval complex probably consisted of a stone building with surrounding fields, outbuildings and boundary ditches. The manor is mentioned in the early parts of the 13th century, when its *'houses, ditches and closes'* were repaired (Hale 1858, 13, cit. 14).
- 6.3 The medieval manor house was replaced by a large brick building around the year 1661. The new house was probably erected for a Mr. J. Nicholas. The name of the architect of the 17th century brick building is unknown, but the structure was raised, extended and altered in the early 19th century. The house is made of red bricks in Flemish bond, a popular brick building technique in 17th century England.
- 6.4 The outlines of the Sandon Bury Farm complex seem to have changed very little since the earliest maps of the area were made in the mid-19th century (Figure 4).
- 6.5 The earliest OS maps of the Sandon area were made in the second half of the 19th century. The map from 1877 indicates few changes in the general outline of the farm complex. The dove cote and the coach house appear to have the same outlines as today (Figure 5).
- 6.6 The next OS map of the area is from 1896. Again, the general layout of the farm is the same, and no changes seem to have been made when it comes to the outlines of the coach house and the dove cote (Figure 6). The OS map from 1922 shows again no obvious changes in the outlines of the coach house and the dove cote (Figure 7).
- 6.7 The Second World War had a limited impact on the village of Sandon. No bombing appears to have taken place in or around the village, and as a result many of the older buildings in the village survived the war. The OS map from 1947 is therefore similar to the maps from before the war (Figure 8). The 1956 OS map also shows very limited changes to the Bury Farm complex (Figure 9).
- 6.8 When it comes to previous owners of Sandon Bury Farm these are fairly well known (Hale 1858). The canons of St. Paul's held Sandon in 1086. They had been in possession of Sandon even before the Conquest. The lessee of Sandon was often one of the canons of the cathedral. Thus in 1155 the canon Alexander was appointed 'farmer' of this manor for life. Towards the end of the next century Master Robert de Braundon had a life interest in the farm of the manor, although Ralph de Diccto, the chronicler, who was dean from about 1181 to 1204, tried to secure that the lessee should always be the dean himself.

- 6.9 The manorial lands were let to John Newport in 1526 and the lease was renewed to him and his eldest son Robert in 1550. Robert succeeded his father about 1552, but was disturbed in his possession by his younger brother Thomas and the latter's daughter Clare, who married her cousin John Newport of East Greenwich. Moreover, in February 1559–60 Robert Dudley Earl of Leicester obtained from the dean and chapter a ninety-nine years' lease of the manorial rights with a reversionary interest in the let to Newport, and conveyed his title to William Hyde of Sandon. Consequently, disputes arose between Hyde and Robert Newport, who feared that Hyde would oust him from his lease and also arrogated to himself the right of holding courts.
- 6.10 After the abolition of cathedral chapters in 1641 the reversionary interest of the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's was sold to Henry Scobell of London, afterwards clerk of the Parliament and Secretary of State. At the Restoration it was recovered by the dean and chapter together with their other estates. In 1863 they sold the manor to Mr. John George Fordham of Royston. From him it descended to Mr. Francis John Fordham of Yew Tree House, Royston. In the later part of the 17th century Sandon Bury Farm was also in the hands of the Nicholas family, who is likely to have carried out a major re-building program at the farm complex.



Figure 4. Map of Sandon from 1842-44. One of the oldest maps of the village shows the layout of Sandon Bury Farm at this time.

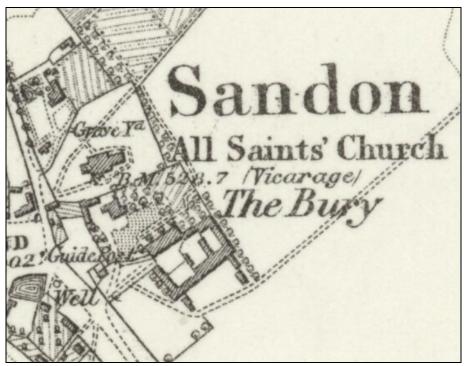


Figure 5. The OS map of Sandon from 1877 shows a similar layout of Sandon Bury Farm as in the previous map. The main building might have changed slightly, but the coach house and the dove cote appear to have the same layout.

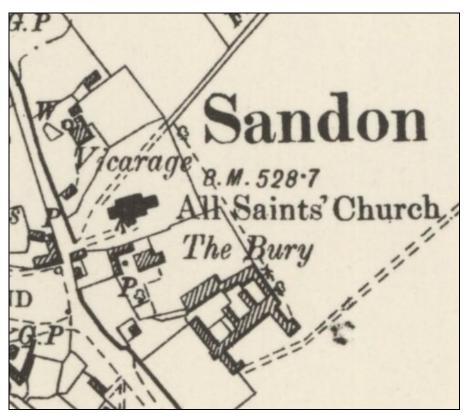


Figure 6. The OS map from 1896 also shows the Sandon Bury Farm complex. The layout of the farm is again similar to the earlier maps.

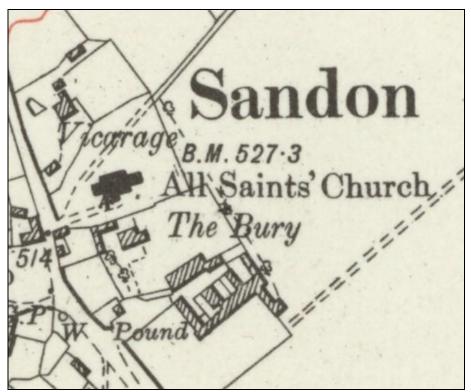


Figure 7. The OS map from 1922 shows no obvious changes of the farm complex.

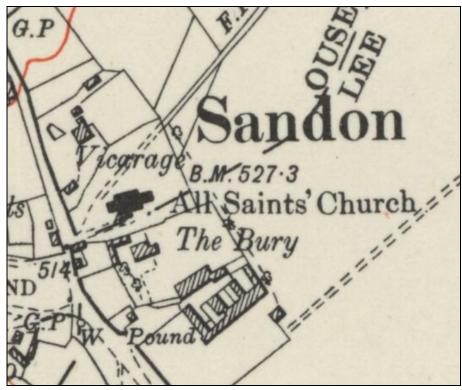


Figure 8. The OS map of Sandon from 1947 is similar to the map from 1922.

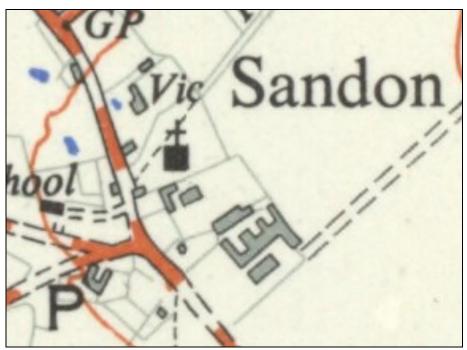


Figure 9. The OS map of Sandon from 1956 shows the coach house and the dove cote with the same general outlines as the maps from the mid-19th century.

Historic Building Recording

- 6.11 Of great interest is that the main building, the coach house and the dove cote have all been erected using similar kind of bricks. The sizes of the headers are about 12 cm and the sizes of the stretchers are about 24cm. All three structures have also been erected in Flemish bond, a popular binding technique in 17th century England. This may indicate that the three structures are roughly contemporary.
- 6.12 Since the long brick enclosure wall, that still surrounds the garden of the farm complex, appears to have been built in a similar technique as the three brick buildings it is possible to see all these structures as a result of the general reshaping of the farm complex in the later part of the 17th century. It is likely that this building campaign started with the main building, and that the other structures were gradually added in the following years.

The Dove Cote

6.13 The dove cote is made of red bricks in Flemish bond and is roughly a square structure. The original roof structure is unknown, but the building is presently covered by a corrugated steel roof (See Plans and Elevations). A secondary 20th century wooden door is located on the south east side of the building, while the original entrance is represented by a much smaller door on the north east side (Figures 10, 11 and 13).

- 6.14 On the south east, north west and the south west sides of the building are original oval brick decorations still visible just under the corrugated steel roof. The shapes of these brick structures appear to be from the late baroque period, and may date the dovecote to the period ca 1670-1700 (Figures 14-15). On the north west side of the building has also a romantic secondary wooden bench been erected against the wall (Figure 12).
- 6.15 The interior of the dove cote has changed little since it was first erected. A modern concrete floor has been added to the structure, but on all four sides of the inner walls are the pigeonholes for the pigeons still preserved (Figures 16-18).
- 6.16 The general impression of the dove cote at Sandon Bury Farm is that it is a good example of a well-preserved building from the period ca 1670-1700. The structure can hopefully be saved for the future if it is restored carefully and with respect to its original history and function.

The Coach House

- 6.17 The coach house is made of red bricks in Flemish bond and is a rectangular structure with a range of wooden outbuildings attached on its south west side. The original roof structure is unknown, but the building is presently covered by tiles (See Plans and Elevations).
- 6.18 The general layout of the coach house appears to have changed little since the mid-19th century (Figure 19). It has the same L-shaped layout today as it had on older maps of the farm complex. The north east half of the structure is erected in bricks, while its south west part is mainly a wooden structure (Figures 22, 23, 24 and 26).
- 6.19 The original brick structure of the coach house is best studied on the south east, the north east and north west sides. In all these walls the original brick work is still visible, and two S-shaped iron reinforcements can still be seen on the north east wall. These iron details may be original features that could have been put in to the wall for supportive as well as decorative reasons (Figure 21).
- 6.20 A large part of the north west wall of the brick structure seems to have been re-built or altered at some point. A range of windows here may for this reason not be original, but could very well be based on older window shapes. The fact that a large section of the north west wall of the rectangular brick structure appears to have been changed at some point is also the fact that a large part of the wall actually consists of wood (Figures 22-23).
- 6.21 The interior of the coach house is very different inside the brick-built part in comparison to the wooden part. Large parts of the supporting timber structure in the wooden parts of the coach house gives the impression of being several hundred years old. The tie beams and cross beams have been linked together

with the down braces in a way that makes it possible to date large parts of the supporting wooden structure to the Early Modern period (Figures 27-30). The outer walls of the timber outbuildings consist otherwise almost entirely of wooden cladding, and gives the impression of being from the 20th century (Figure 24).

- 6.22 The interior of the brick-built part of the coach house has in recent years been completely covered with a thick layer of white plaster. For this reason, it is difficult to see any details in the preserved brickworks behind the plaster (Figures 31-32).
- 6.23 A few older wooden doors in the brick-built part of the coach house have been preserved, but the doors in the entire coach house have otherwise been replaced and/or painted white in recent years (Figure 33).
- 6.24 The general impression of the coach house at Sandon Bury Farm is that it is a good example of a well-preserved timber framed building from the period ca 1670-1800. It is especially large parts of the supporting timber structure in the wooden part of the building, as well as the brick walls in the brick-built part of the structure, that may be original and go back to the later part of the 17th century. The structure can hopefully be saved for the future if it is restored carefully and with respect to its original history and function.

7 DISCUSSION

- 7.1 The historic building recording at Sandon Bury Farm, Sandon, Hertfordshire revealed much new information regarding the history and building sequences in the old dove cote and coach house within the farm complex.
- 7.2 There are good reasons to believe that the dove cote was entirely erected in the later part of the 17th century. Even if we do not know what the original roof design looked like the standing brick walls, with their external brick decorations, give us reason to date the structure to the late baroque era, or ca 1670-1700.
- 7.3 The coach house has proved to consist of two different parts, that may be roughly contemporary. A rectangular brick building in the north east can, through its well-preserved brick walls, be dated to the 17th century. A range of wooden outbuildings south west of the brick structure has a well-preserved supportive timber structure, which, for technical reasons, can be dated to the early Modern Period, or ca 1670-1700.
- 7.4 This makes it likely that the dove cote and the coach house are roughly contemporary with the main building at Sandon Bury Farm, and that the three structures should be seen in the light of the extensive building program that was carried out at the farm complex around the year 1661.

7.5 The farm complex, therefore, contains existing building structures of great historical and archaeological significance, and their incorporation in the new event centre must be carried out with great care. Once this has been done, however, it will give future generations the chance to experience these important historical remains.

8 ARCHIVE

The archive consists of the following:

Paper Record

The project brief Written Scheme of Investigation The photographic and drawn records The project report
The primary site records

The archive is currently maintained by Independent Archaeology Consultants. The archive will be transferred to:

The collections at Hertford Museum

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APPENDICES

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Photos



Figure 10. The 17th century dovecote from east.



Figure 11. The dovecote from northeast.



Figure 12. A wooden bench on the north west side of the dovecote.



Figure 13. The secondary 20th century wooden doors on the south east side of the dovecote.



Figure 14. Brick decoration on the south east wall of the dovecote.



Figure 15. Brick decoration on the north west side of the dovecote.



Figure 16. The interior of the dovecote. North west facing photo.



Figure 17. The interior of the dovecote. North facing photo.



Figure 18. The original entrance to the dovecote with its old wooden door. North east facing photo.



Figure 19. The 17th century coach house from south east.



Figure 20. The north east wall of the coach house.



Figure 21. S-shaped iron reinforcement in the north east wall of the coach house.



Figure 22. The north west wall of the coach house was facing the cemetery. The central part of this wall showed signs of having been re-built.



Figure 23. The windows in the north west wall of the coach house showed signs of having been re-built, and were probably not original.



Figure 24. On the south west side of the coach house were a range of wooden outbuildings.



Figure 25. The entrances to the wooden outbuildings had been modernised. West facing photo.



Figure 26. The section were the wooden outbuildings met the brick-built part of the coach house. South west facing photo.



Figure 27. The wooden beams in the supporting structure of the old outhouses consisted of a mix of old and younger timber. South east facing photo.



Figure 28. A section with older wooden beams in the outbuildings south of the 17th century brick coach house. South facing photo.



Figure 29. The north wall and supporting wooden beams in the wooden outbuilding next to the coach house. North west facing photo.



Figure 30. The joints between the roof and wall beams in the wooden outbuilding next to the coach house is likely to be of 17th century date. West facing photo.



Figure 31. The interior of the 17th century brick coach house. The walls were largely covered by a thick layer of white plaster and were for this reason difficult to study in more detail. North east facing photo.

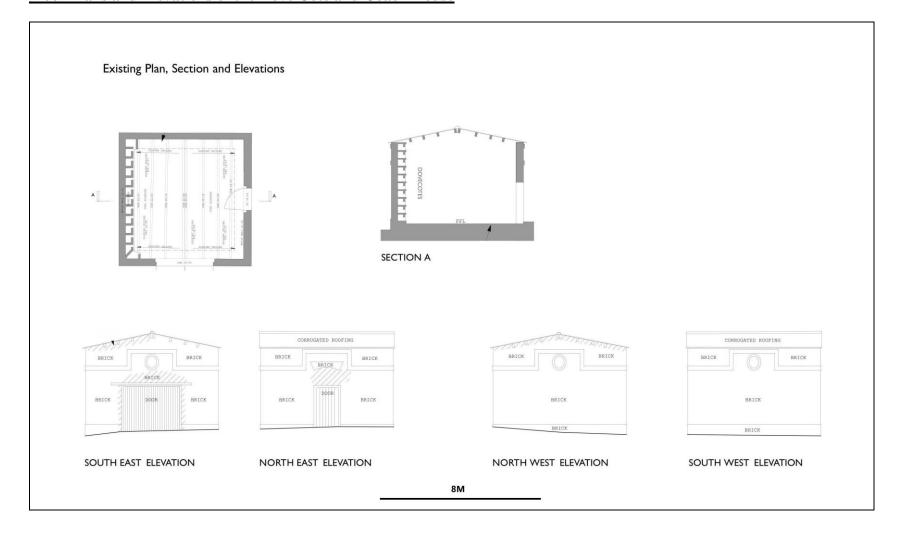


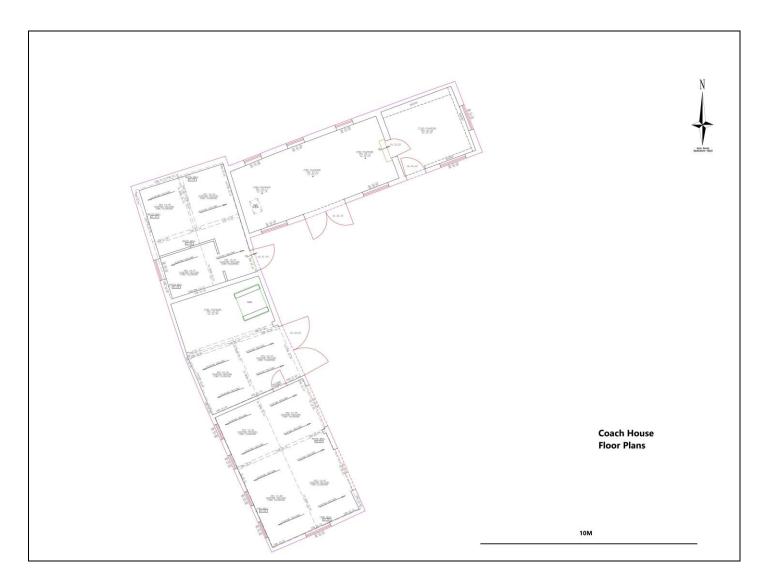
Figure 32. The western part of the 17th century brick coach house. The walls in this part of the building had also been covered with white plaster. South west facing photo.

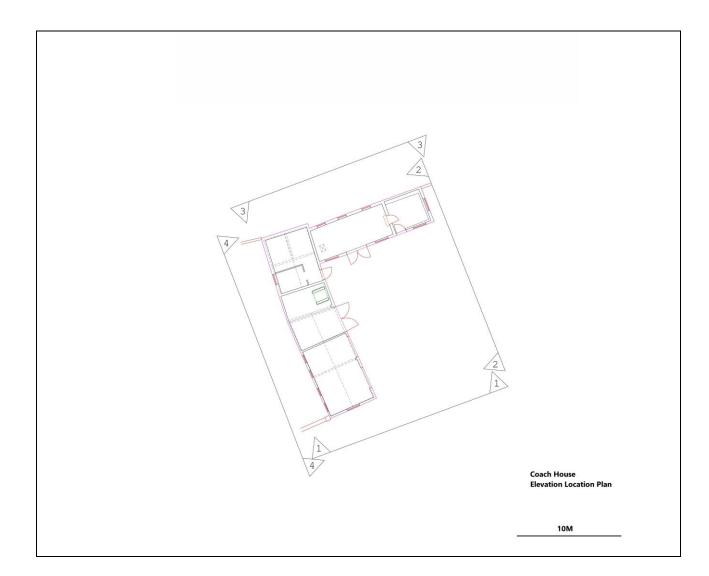


Figure 33. A door in the 17th century coach house. South east facing photo.

Floor Plans and Elevations of the Dove Cote and Coach House

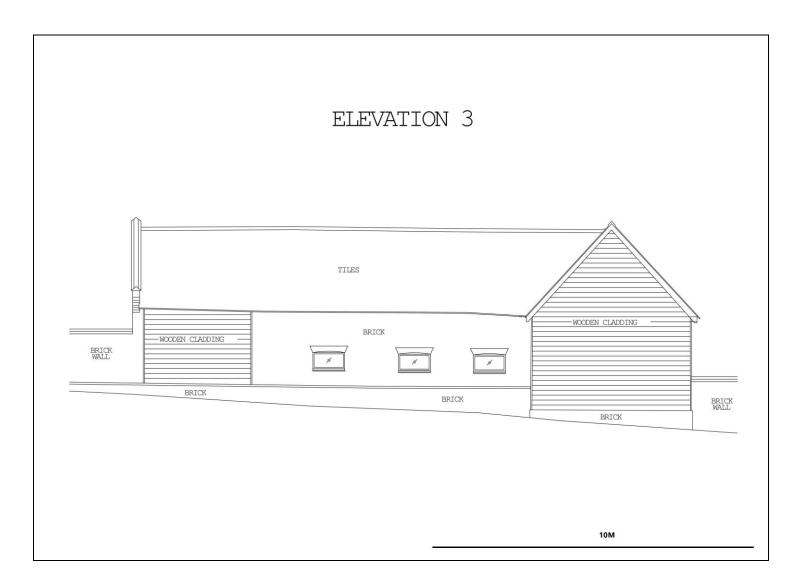


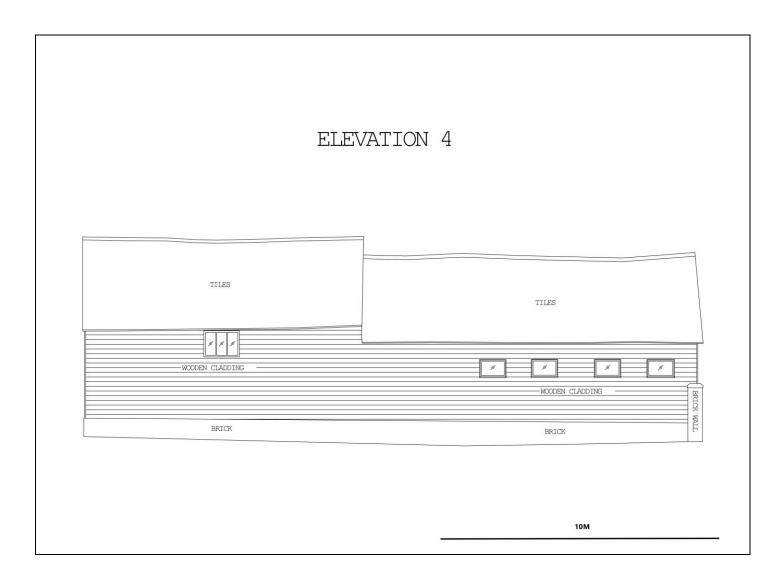












OASIS Form

OASIS ID: independ1-367704

Project details

Project name Historic Building Recording, Sandon Bury Farm, Sandon, Hertfordshire

Short description of the project An historic building recording of the old dovecote and coah house at Sandon Bury Farm.

Project dates Start: 16-09-2019 End: 18-09-2019

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project reference codes SBFH19 - Sitecode

Any associated project reference codes 18/00584/FP - Planning Application No.

Type of project Building Recording

Site status Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area

Current Land use Residential 1 - General Residential

Monument type UF SN CL Post Medieval

Monument type SN CL BT Post Medieval

Significant Finds SN CL BT Post Medieval

Significant Finds SN CL BT Post Medieval

Methods & techniques "Measured Survey", "Photographic Survey"

Prompt Planning condition

Project location

Sandon Bury Farm, Sandon, Hertfordshire: Level 3 Historic Building Recording

Country England

Site location HERTFORDSHIRE NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE SANDON Sandon Bury Farm, Sandon, Hertfordshire

Postcode SG9 0RJ

Study area 4 Hectares

Site coordinates TL 32271 34457 51.992346567047 -0.073325565954 51 59 32 N 000 04 23 W Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 159m Max: 161m

Project creators

Name of Organisation Independent Archaeology Consultants

Project brief originator Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body

Project design originator Dr Christer Carlsson
Project director/manager Dr Christer Carlsson
Project supervisor Dr Christer Carlsson

Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Hertfordshire County Council

Physical Contents "other"

Digital Archive recipient Hertfordshire County Council

Digital Contents "none","other"

Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography", "Images vector", "Survey"

Paper Archive recipient Hertfordshire County Council

Paper Contents "none","other"

Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Drawing","Map","Photograph","Plan","Report","Survey "
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