



Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd

Modern living in an historic environment

**A Heritage Asset Survey at Chartlands,
The Farmhouse, 1 Cherry Tree Lane,
Great Houghton, Northamptonshire**

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Summary

Chartlands, also called The Farmhouse, is a Grade II Listed building which originates before 1813, but has been much-altered, inside and out. Areas currently proposed for fresh, minor alterations are not largely significant to the historic assets of the property and if implemented, would arguably not prevent the ongoing understanding and ‘reading’ of the building or adversely affect its setting.

Introduction

The Farmhouse, also known as Chartlands, has been officially described as a 19th-century farmhouse which stands north of The Cross at its junction with Cherry Tree Lane, Great Houghton, Northamptonshire (NGR: SP 79285 59051; Fig 1). Its address today is 1 Cherry Tree Lane.

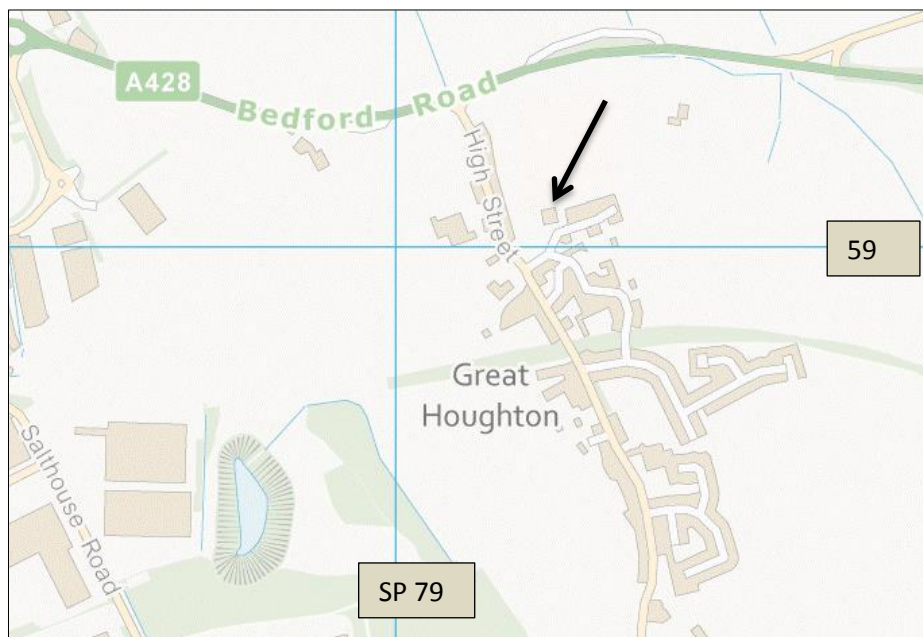


Fig 1: Site location (arrowed). Contains Ordnance Survey data
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The farmhouse is a Grade II Listed Building, of which the following is an exterior legacy-listing (www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk):

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THE CROSS 1.5327 (North Side)

Great Houghton

No 1(The Farm House)

SP 7959 25/419

II

2.Early C19. Stone, Welsh slated roof with flanking chimneys. 3 storeys, south front 4 windows, ground floor sashes, 1st floor 3 light casements. Left central C19 porch, 4 panelled door. Listing NGR: SP7927859055.

This unhelpfully short description is based on an exterior view, but fails to note some of the principal features of that exterior, which will be noted in detail below.

Mr and Mrs Ribbans, who currently own The Farmhouse, wish to make alterations to the ground floor interior. The current report has been prepared to facilitate better understanding of the house and its historic character, providing data to enable informed decisions to be made as to the feasibility and desirability of the proposed changes, given the statutory listed status of the house. Assessment and recording were carried out on the exterior and then the affected portions of the ground floor of the house. The upper floors were not under scrutiny. The fieldwork was carried out by Charlotte Walker and Iain Soden of IS Heritage Ltd. The base plan created for analysis and phasing was based upon the architect's plan by Tad Dobraszczyk RIBA.

Origins and development

The house has stood on this spot since at least 1813, when it is shown on the first surviving map, by the Ordnance Survey, at the small scale used in the initial drawings made by their surveyors (Fig 2). The small scale makes detail very difficult to postulate but the building does appear long and thin, with a smaller structure, detached, in front of it and at the roadside, where there is now only lawn and trees.



Fig 2: Ordnance survey Surveyors' Drawing 1813, for which see further www.bl.ac.uk (Northampton 11 sheet); not to scale. The small original scale cannot fail to hide the long farmhouse range (arrowed). Other than that, detail is hard to discern. At this date, there also appears to be a building directly in front of it.

By the time that the Tithe Map for the village was produced in 1839, the detached frontage structure had gone, but the detail of the farmhouse is such that one can see clearly that the main building was indeed long and thin, comprising the main house as the central block with narrower, flanking wings (Fig 3). These are interpretable on the basis of what survives today as the main house, with the service range added to the west. A balancing range on the east seems to have been lost thereafter.



Fig 3: 1839 Tithe Map (NRO: T153). This is a distinctive, balanced and symmetrical building, lacking the later rear extension, but has an eastwards range as a counterpart of the surviving service range.

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In 1886 the 1st edition of the Ordnance Survey national coverage was published. The 25-inch map shows the house almost as it is known today (Fig 4). To the western service range has been added a rear, northern extension, while to the south-west have been built two detached buildings, the location of one of which is mirrored by the modern garage. The sweep of the current drive has been established and the spring and pond near the road frontage is shown for the first time. The farmhouse had lost its former eastern arm before this date.

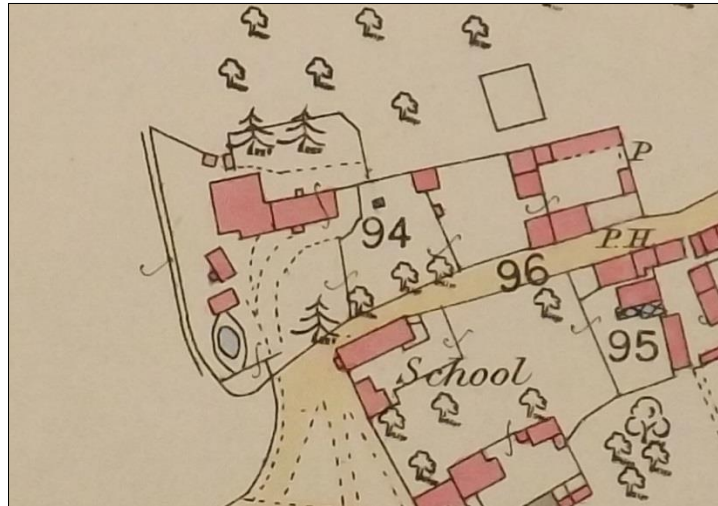


Fig 4: 1886 1st Edition Ordnance Survey. Since 1839, the farmhouse has lost its eastern range but has gained the rear extensions which survive today. Note the two buildings to the south west, now replaced by the single garage building.

The 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map shows the property virtually unchanged from 1886 (Fig 5).

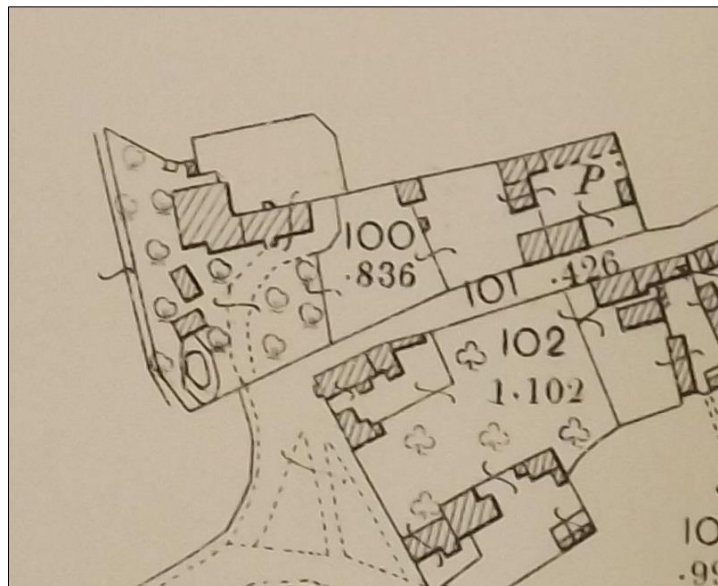


Fig 5: 1900 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey. Little has changed since 1886

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Understanding the buildings



Fig 6: Kitchen range and service range set back to left (front, south, elevation)



Fig 7: Main house, front, south, elevation; note the added second floor



Fig 8: The front of The Farmhouse, with the whole surviving range visible; viewed from the south-east

The surviving building is principally a simple two-bay cottage with central cross-passage and stair. Built of Limestone with quoins of Northampton Sand with Ironstone it has end-stacks which more likely indicate a date in the 18th century rather than earlier (Fig 7 and 8). A second storey, entirely of the latter stone at the front (but a mixture at the rear), has been added, with the current (but obviously not the original) roof being of Welsh slate. The end chimney stacks, which relate to the building in its heightened state, are of brick.

Secondary to the main house is a two-storey kitchen block of the same depth as the main house (Fig 6). It is of ironstone with a brick chimney stack. It has been built to serve the main house but at some point has probably been fully separated off and lived-in as an individual dwelling.

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The ground floor of this block is today given over almost entirely to a farmhouse-kitchen function, with a simple inserted stair alongside. The kitchen itself, measuring 5.72m front to back x 5.25m side to side, is entirely modern, of stripped pine made to look old but fitted to accompany modern appliances. Only the window shutters and surround and the brick fireplace (probably once housing a cast-iron range) are older, but the last of these has been emptied, stripped of its plaster and incorporated as a feature; it now holds an Aga-stove and two flanking niches, themselves being subsequently added, have been partly blocked (Fig 9). A much-denuded bell-board is affixed high on the east wall, the only other old feature from when the room was fully developed as a 'service' kitchen (Fig 10). The doors in and out of the kitchen are a mish-mash of different dates and styles, suggesting that most if not all of them have been moved around or imported at the same time as the kitchen reached its final layout. The floor is of modern tiles, laid on concrete and probably a modern visqueen membrane; the floor has been dug out previously to lay these.



Fig 9: The kitchen, viewed from the front door



Fig 10: A bell-stump on the bell-board

The stair to the side of the kitchen is an insert, which has left the main dining-room accessed awkwardly from the kitchen across their foot (Fig 11). This mix of service and private space would have been studiously avoided when the kitchen was first added. The original entrance directly from kitchen to dining room was at the opposite end of the same wall, where the old doorway is blocked and now used as a shoe cupboard. It lies in a dead space under the current stairs, adjacent to the old back door to the service range and shut off from the kitchen (Fig 12).

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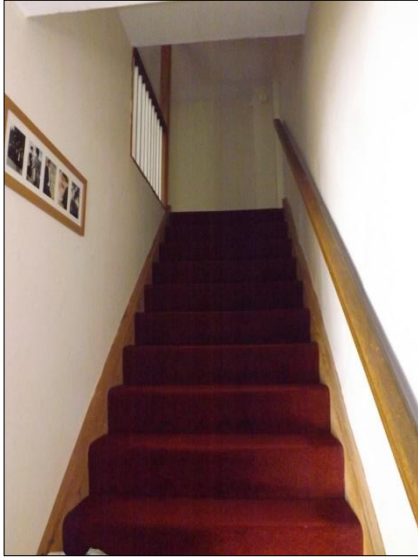


Fig 11: The inserted kitchen stair, from the foot; Kitchen door to left and Dining Room door to right (out of picture)



Fig 12: The blocked Dining Room doorway, from the Kitchen; also visible is the back door.

The main stairs of the house rise from the central hall, which is a modern approximation of the original entrance space, the stairs turned through 90-degrees where they would originally have ascended from the front door (possibly with a lost cellar-access beneath). Today, the modern partitions serve only to separate the lounge and dining room from the awkward stair, where their predecessors separated reception- from private-space (Fig 13).



Fig 13: The awkward centre hallway, its route blocked by a stair and flanked by modern RSJ-topped partitions

On the extreme western end of the two blocks, and set back considerably, is a small service building, measuring 5.58m side to side x 4.44m front-back, which on the ground floor contains a fine and well-conserved three-phase rustic brick range with complicated brick flues, consisting of hearth, bread-oven and two flanking coppers, which would have provided both laundry and brewing capacity to the farmhouse. The coppers retain their linings and probably their original covers. Together they

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are the *raison d'être* for the room/block and are its pre-eminent heritage asset. While the bricks of the central fireplace are of late 18th-century or early 19th-century sizes, those used to build the added oven and coppers are of larger size, probably post-dating the final repeal of the 1770s brick tax (1851), while a row of bull-nosed bricks surmount one copper, a type not generally widespread until the High Victorian period 1850-75. This cooking/brewing/laundry array was built up therefore in increments, and not all fitted out straightaway. This service range did not have had a first floor originally. Indeed the inserted ceiling of the ground floor has fully exposed joists, but is entirely modern, painted white. The front-facing window is a replacement, probably of c1900-1920, based upon its chunkily proportioned timber mullions.



Fig 14: The beautifully-conserved service range with its end fireplace and added oven (L) and coppers (L & R)

To the rear has been added a store-building, secondary to the service range, which makes a butt joint with both this and the kitchen adjacent to one of the back doors. Its eastern half has in recent years been given an added first floor, built in similar stonework which is discernible in its different coursing. On the ground floor it is divided into a study on the west and on the east a modern pantry and utility room; these lie to either side of an original corridor to a back door, beyond which today is a brick-built family room with modern stair, measuring 8.89m x 6.58m internally. As the only brick building on the site, the family room is a departure from the vernacular tradition hereabouts.



Fig 15: Added rear store wing, from the east. The first floor is entirely modern, the break visible.



Fig 16: The modern, brick-built family room to the rear, viewed from the east

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Fig 17: The pantry, created from part of the rear wing



Fig 18: Utility room, also created from part of the rear wing

The pantry and utility room back onto the kitchen but have themselves been created out of a single space (Figs 17 and 18). They share the same modern floor-type, of a chequerboard of faux-Victorian/Edwardian quarry tiles laid on concrete; again with the kitchen any older floor has been dug out for this replacement.

The pantry measures 3.22m x 1.5m in plan, while the adjacent utility room measures 4.44m x 3.33m, internally.

The outer (east) wall of the utility room carries the modern white goods with their drainage and ventilation, together with the boiler piping (Fig 18). This has resulted in the wall below the window having been chopped out over some distance, leaving almost no original unaltered stonework (Fig 19).

The current windows of the rear range are fitted with monkey-tail stays, suggesting fenestration as late as the 1930s.

The partition between the utility room and pantry may be of a number of phases and rebuilds/repairs since it contains brickwork with bonding timbers (a typical late 18th –early 19th century construction method), but also with a large rebuilt area in modern blockwork, and a timber containing possible joist-mortises (of unknown use or origin).



Fig 19: The utility room window, with its majority re-ordered stonework, due partly to six ventilators below

A separate garage building outside the front western end of the farmhouse is modern, but has replaced one of two earlier buildings of similar size and in a similar location (Fig 20; cf Figs 4 and 5).



Fig 20: modern garage

There remains a tiny piece of evidence on the ground for the former eastern arm of the farmhouse inferred from historic maps, where a redundant, reduced stone foundation protrudes at the foot of the eastern gable at its southern end (Fig 21). There is no evidence for the use of the former building but based upon the symmetry of the plan of 1839, one might expect buildings to balance both the kitchen and the set-back service range. Modern pointing on the east gable of the farmhouse has unfortunately masked any scar which may have accompanied the lost gable, and a clipped *cotoneaster-type* shrub prevents scrutiny of the wall face lower down.



Fig 21: Evidence for a lost, eastern range (see Fig 22 for exact location)

All the main blocks of the buildings as they survive can thus be read in some detail, being architecturally separable. They have been phased below and also dated in accordance with their appearance on historic maps (Fig 22).

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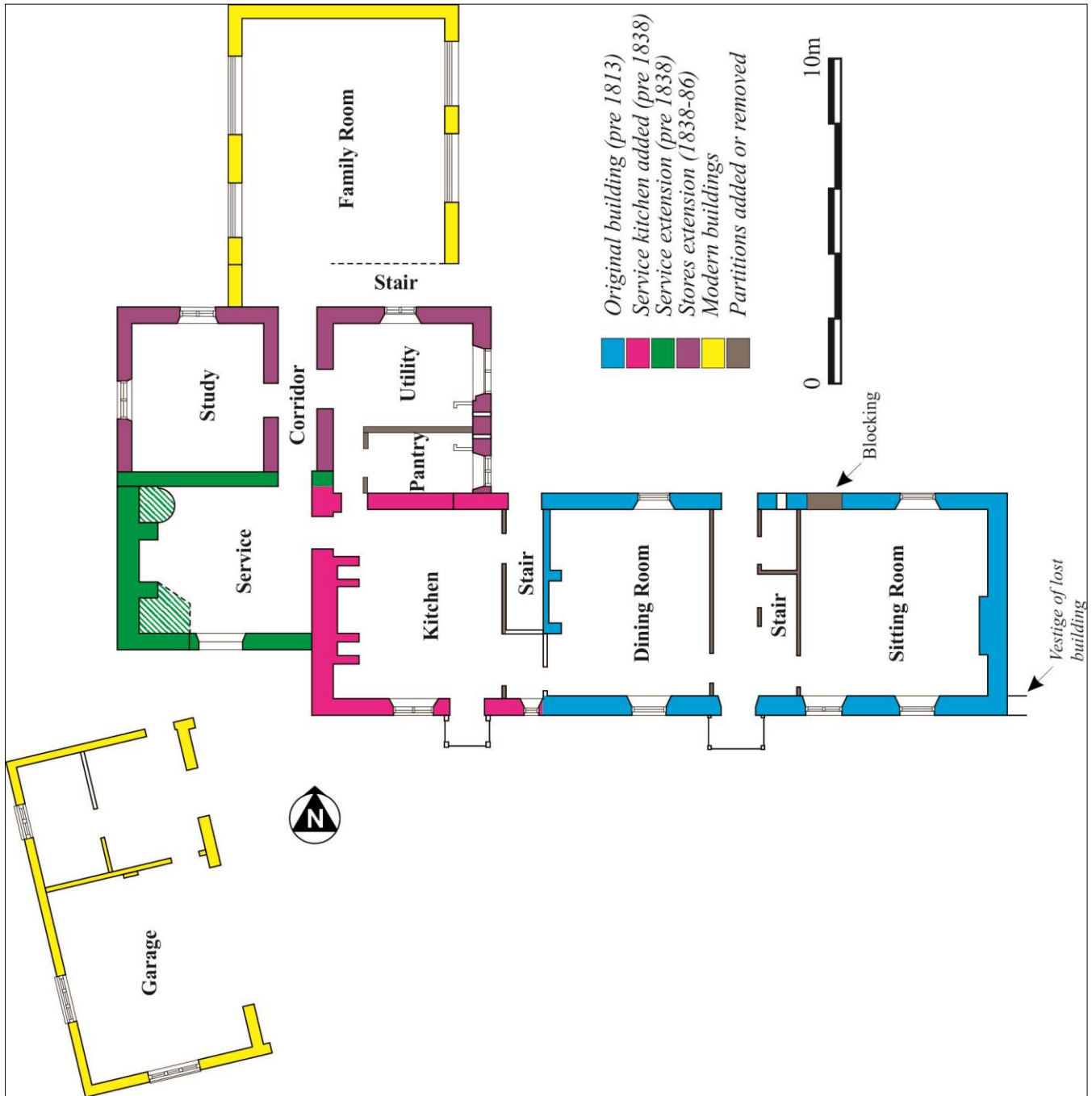


Fig 22: The farmhouse, phased and (where possible) dated; based, with thanks, upon a plan by Tad Dobraszcyk RIBA.

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A summary assessment of the affected heritage assets

As has been seen above, the shell of the building is relatively easy to read and contains a great deal of detail, from the development of the building's early plan-form, datable from historic maps, to the raising of the roof and a second floor, which left most of the downstairs windows as relatively early (pre-c1850), un-horned sashes. The individual rooms which are the subject of current alteration proposals are much altered, where the remaining historic assets are, for the most part, the focus of the room and will be unaffected. In view of what is now known of the building and the detail with which its ground floor has been scrutinised, the following is a suggested summary of the remaining assets in those rooms/blocks and the impacts and moderating factors of the proposals on the fabric. It is possible that, if they go ahead, some recording and analysis may be required to monitor and mitigate any minor loss of fabric or further elucidate the detail of the building's development.

Within the historic plan-form that can be traced, and amidst the (admittedly fine quality) modern décor, the following features are considered to be the principal historically- or architecturally-significant assets of the ground floor of the farmhouse, from which the interiors derive much of their current character:

Room	Asset
Lounge	Fireplace, windows
Dining room	Fireplace and flanking alcoves, possible timber upright, windows
Hall	Front and back exterior doors
Kitchen	Front exterior door, window, former fireplace, bell-board, back exterior door
Service range	Fireplace with oven and flanking coppers -very fine, and superbly conserved

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The proposals

	Proposal	Impact	Moderating Factors	Mitigation
1	Knock through rear wall of existing kitchen to join with pantry	Loss of historic fabric	This is a wall which currently has no aspect visible on either side, being today an interior wall.	Photographic recording at stripping out to record any blocked rear window;
2	Renew kitchen interior	Replacement of modern kitchen	Although tasteful, the current kitchen layout is modern and not of any historical significance; Floors are all modern	none
3	Take out central stairs and partition with kitchen	Loss of partition	The remains of the servants' bell-board will be retained	Photographic recording at stripping out to record original gable end
4	<i>Ditto</i>	Loss of stairs	These stairs are a relatively modern insertion as indicated by the insertion of a variety of non-matching doors of different periods. They occupy a space where originally the main house was intended to connect directly with the kitchen.	As 3, of which the work is part
5	Link modern outbuilding (Garage) to service range	Loss of window; setting	The window is little earlier than c1900/1910, and much repaired; The opening would simply become a doorway; Planting means that access around the west end of the buildings is not an appreciable aspect or prospect	None
6	New door to rear extension where currently a window	Loss of stonework	Stonework has been rebuilt for modern ventilators of white-goods and boiler	None
7	Loss of partition between pantry and utility	Loss of fabric	Fabric is a multi-phase patchwork of rebuilds, date uncertain, but some modern included. Floor is modern	Photographic record (as 1)
8	Loss or partial loss of partition between dining room and hall	Loss of fabric	Fabric is modern (inc skirting), to which modern re-laid hall flagstones abut very closely. Upper portion includes boxed-in RSJ tie from front to back (one of two on either side of this modern re-vamped but awkward hall-space).	There may be a possible timber upright in the centre of partition between the hall and dining room, which should not be lost, all that is left from an earlier layout. Dining room cornice might remain to continue to indicate the recent layout and permit continued reading of the sequence.
9	Construct new garage to east	Change in setting	The garage may replace the lost wing to some extent. The house has no prospect in this direction, nor does it present a desirable or favourable aspect, either from the road or close-up.	An archaeological watching brief may be appropriate on foundation-digging to plot the demolished wing, if remains are present.

