



Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd

Modern living in an historic environment

A Heritage Asset Survey of Holly Bank

31 High Street, Bugbrooke.

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Summary

This listed cottage, originally constructed in 1789 for a maltster, has been extended three times as the needs of successive owners changed. A fifth phase was added in the recent creation of a garage. As a building it remains easily read and has been noticeably conserved with sensitivity and good quality finishes.

Introduction

Holly Bank, 31 High Street stands on the east side of the High Street, Bugbrooke, Northamptonshire close to the midpoint of its own plot, set back from a discontinuous frontage (NGR: SP 67723 57440; Fig 1). The house is designated as a Grade II Listed Building.



Fig 1: Property location (arrowed). Contains Ordnance Survey data

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The house is built almost entirely from Northampton Sand with Ironstone, with the addition of some alterations in brick. It has been carefully conserved in recent years and ageing fixtures and fittings (such as window frames and distinctive iron quadrant stays) sensitively replaced with authentic modern copies in keeping with the date of the building.

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The building is of four basic phases which will be discussed later in this report, for which dating evidence, although not always tight, does present a clear *terminus post quem* in most cases.



Fig 2: The front (west-facing) aspect of the house with its principal added range behind.

The English Heritage description of the building is as follows:

House. Dated 1789, renovated 20th century. Coursed squared ironstone, 20th century plain-tile roof replacing thatch, brick end stacks. Two-unit plan. Two storeys and attic; two-window range. Central part-glazed 20th century door with overhead light in 20th century gabled timber porch. Three-light leaded casement windows to ground and first floors with old catches and flat-arched heads. Datestone above door inscribed P/RB/1789; Norwich insurance plaque below. Plinth, roof dormers and stone-coped gables with kneelers. Wing to rear left. Interior has stop-chamfered spine beams and open fireplace with chamfered bressumer. Stone-flagged floors.

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Historical background

Bugbrooke was enclosed in 1779, ten years before Holly Bank was built. The Inclosure map indicates that there may have been earlier building/s on this plot although it is not clear what they might have been (Fig 3).

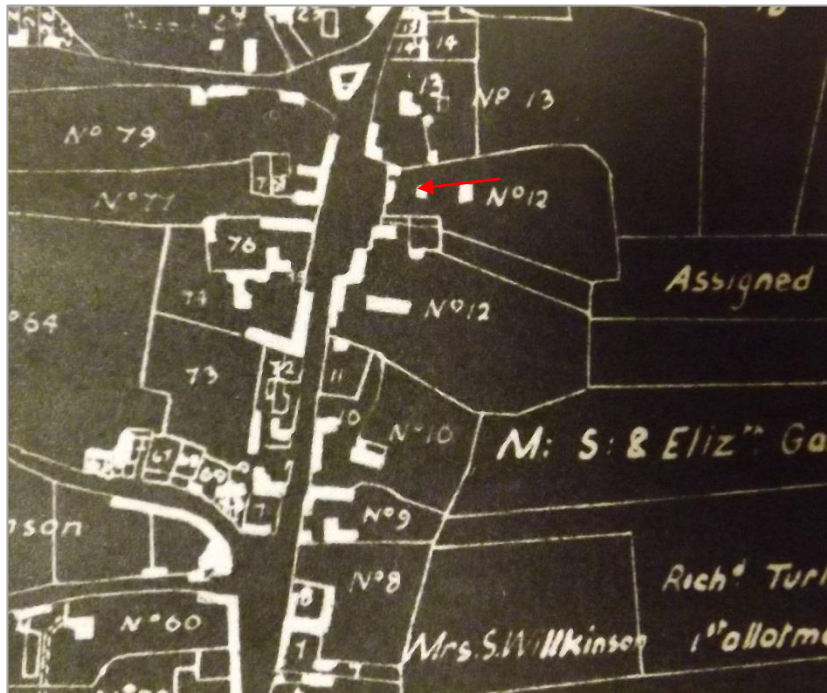


Fig 3: 1779 Inclosure map of Bugbrooke,
showing approximate position of Holly Bank

Built in 1789, the date-stone of the house includes the letters *P/RB*, which signify the initials of the first owners, Richard and Beatrice Parberry.

Records of the Sun Fire Office indicate that Richard Parberry, described as a Northamptonshire Farmer, held a fire insurance policy from them dated 22nd October 1789 (London Metropolitan Archives: MS 11936/364/562236). Details of the policy are not known but it presumably included the house. No information was found relating to the later Norwich Union insurance.

An advert placed in the Northampton Mercury (dated 1st March 1794) gives details of a sale of effects of Richard Parberry following his death in that year:

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*To be sold by auction, by Robert Blaby, On Thursday the 6th of March instant, the live & dead stock, dairy and brewing utensils, & some household- furniture, of the late Mr RICHARD PARBERRY, of Bugbrook, Northamptonshire. The livestock consists of about 22 sheep ; one barren heifer, one new-milch'd Cow; and one large fat barrow hog.— The dead stock, eight quarters and five bushels of excellent Two- years- old wheat, hovel of old beans, a stump of old and a bit of new hay ; very good brewing and dairy utensils, iron-bound hogsheads, *****, and smaller calks, an iron- bound gallon calk, new; a quantity of ale, and other very good Beer ; a quantity of bacon; winnowing fan, new, and other barn tackle ; ladders, chairs, tables, drawers, & c and a quantity of old iron. The Sale to begin at Ten o'clock- NORTHAMPTON*



Fig 4: Ordnance Survey drawing, 1813, showing approximate location of house

The 1813 map, though at a fairly small scale, shows the approximate position of the house, although any discussion of its size at this date is not possible. An 1850 tithe map of the village shows many of the surrounding properties, but not Holly Bank, suggesting that the owners of the property were not liable to pay tithes. The first detailed maps of the property are Ordnance Survey maps from the late 19th century onwards. The maps suggest that there has been little change to the exterior plan of the property from the 1880s onwards, with map of 1900 clearly showing the main building and cross passage separating the outbuilding to the east.

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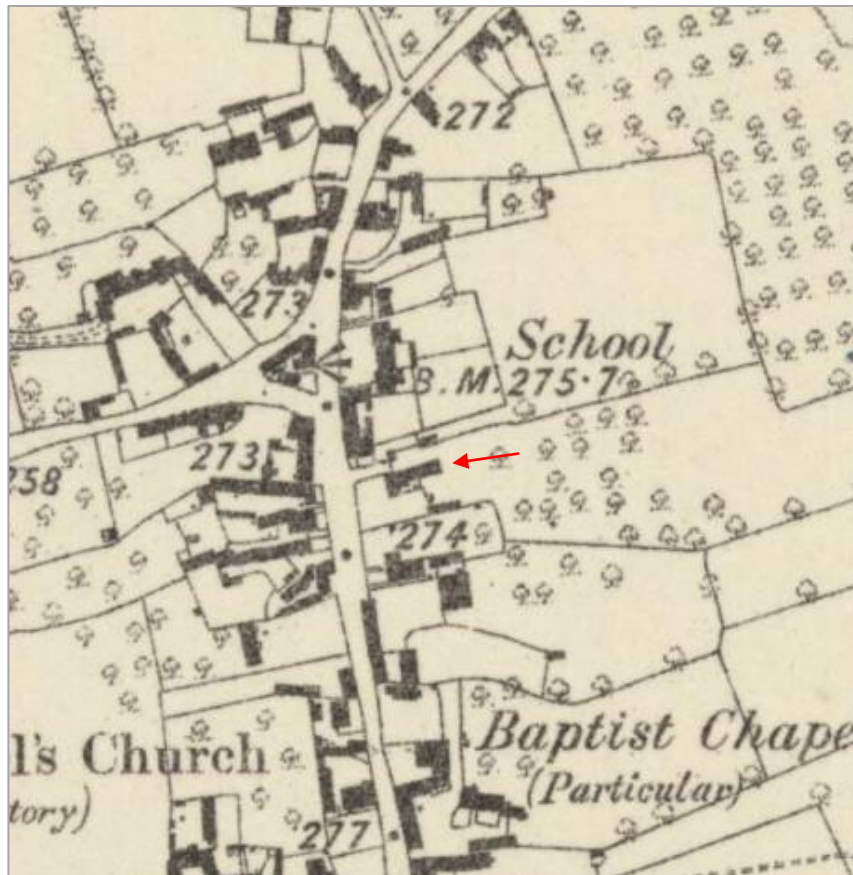


Fig 5: Ordnance Survey map, 1883

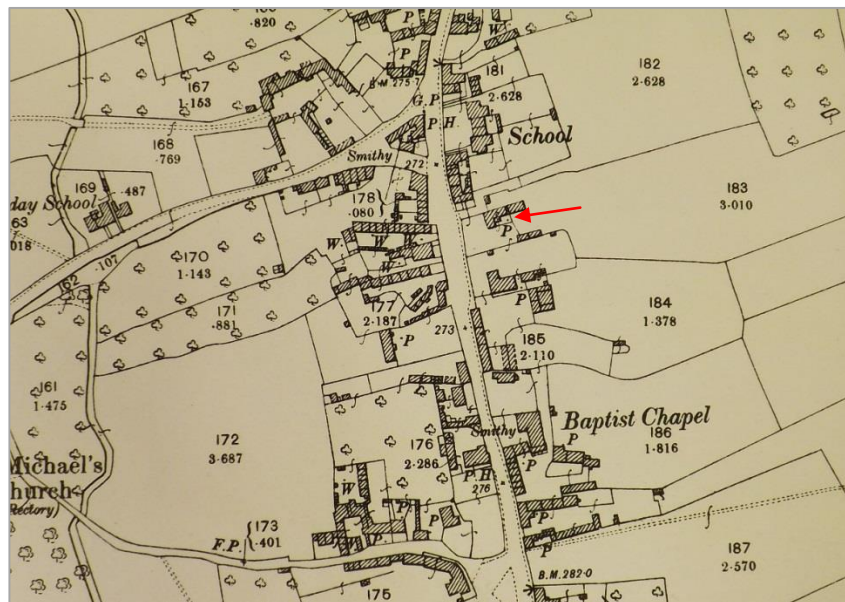


Fig 6: Ordnance Survey, 1900

The house was owned by the Adams family, who possessed extensive property in the area, for some time and in the 1940s and 1950s was occupied by their farm manager Mr Smart (Bugbrooke History Group, 1999). The thatch on the roof was replaced in the same period by the tile and slate which covers it today, allowing for the insertion of the present forward-facing roof dormers and the greater

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light they throw into the attic bedrooms. In a conveyance dated 1953 the house and premises known as Holly Bank were sold by Mr J R Adams to Mr and Mrs Smith, although the rear part of the outbuilding, beyond the cross passage, was only conveyed to them a year later.

In the 1990s the outbuilding to the rear, which appears to already have been substantially altered from stone partly to brick (indicated below in Fig 7), was converted into a double garage. The conversion involved the demolition of a single storey brick lean-to potting shed/greenhouse at the eastern end of the outbuilding, although the northern, stone elevation remained unchanged to eaves height.



Fig 7: The form (in yellow) of the phase 3 stone outbuildings prior to a) partial brick rebuild with two phases of lean-to greenhouse and b) remodelling to form the current garage

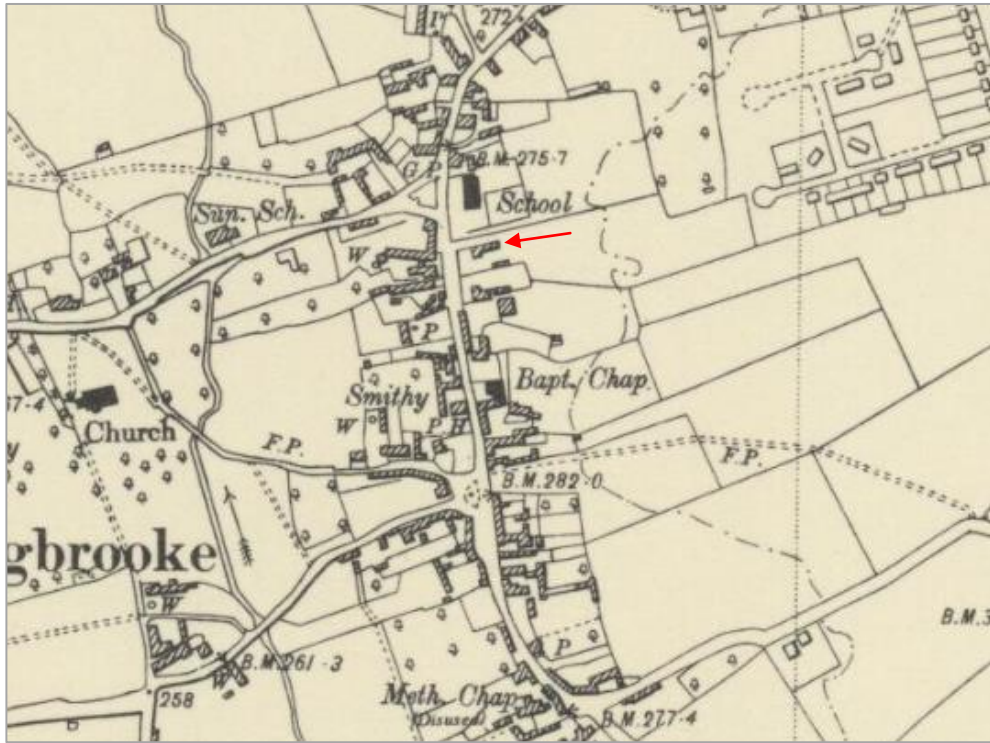


Fig 8: 1950 Ordnance Survey map



Fig 9: The house, Ground and First floors, phased; cellar (under G2) and attic plans not included

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Phase One, exterior

The first phase of the present building is a fine, late eighteenth-century house of an L-shape plan, built of finely dressed ashlar blocks of gingerbread-coloured Northampton Sand with Ironstone (Figs 2 and 9). The ashlars are well-coursed and in varying depths and bonded with thin mortar joints, the whole set above a simple stepped plinth. The front of the house faces west onto the High Street and comprises a simple two-bay elevation with a centrally-placed doorway now protected by a twentieth-century porch comprising a small gabled tiled roof supported on timber posts resting on dwarf walls. To each side, on each floor, are two windows. Those on the ground floor comprise oak frames dividing each opening into three panels filled with fifteen leaded panes each, the two panels on either side are fixed whilst the central one is an opening casement hung on iron hinge-pintles with monkey tail flourishes to the lower ends, a style which might be said to be anachronistic, as published dated examples are of later 17th-century origin (Hall 2005, fig 3.51). The iron frames in timber casements have quadrant stays and tulip-leaf type handles. The window openings are set beneath gauged stone flat lintels, and the upper windows are essentially identical in construction although of very slightly different dimensions. Here each panel is fitted with twelve leaded panes each.

Centrally placed at first floor level is a datestone inscribed with the initials P for the surname, Parbery and R and B for first names, Richard and Beatrice above the date 1789. Beneath is a fire insurance plaque of the Norwich Insurance Company. Above eaves level the roof is covered with red clay tiles, a modern, almost certainly post-Second World War alteration which replaced the thatch covering shown on photographs before that date and also indicated by the steep slope and currently raised coping stones to each gable end. Within the front roof slope are two flat-roofed casement dormer windows which are apparently contemporary with the re-roofing since they do not appear on any early photographs.

The south gable is comparatively plain but built of the same quality ashlar set on a plinth. There is only one window within this elevation at attic level, a twelve pane leaded casement set within a timber (painted) frame beneath a timber lintel. Within the gable is an area of modern cement render, presumably the result of weathering of the stonework at this level (as one might expect of the usually more weather-beaten south-face). The single chimney stack, placed centrally at the ridge has been rebuilt above the ridge in what appears to be nineteenth- or twentieth-century red brick; it has two modern red clay chimney pots indicating two flues. A photograph from around the 1920s shows that the stacks have been reduced significantly in height – probably at the time that the thatched roof was replaced with tiles.

The east elevation of the same fine ashlar has a three light window to the ground floor divided into equal parts and glazed with leaded panes (Fig 10). It is set here beneath a timber, most probably oak, lintel and is now partly obscured by a low-level modern glazed porch (see Fig 9, Phase Four). At first floor level there is a smaller two light leaded casement window.

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Fig 10: View of the property showing the south and east elevations

The south elevation of the rear wing is now covered by the modern porch but an original doorway and flanking window are present, the doorway fitted with a timber plank door, the window a single-light fixed leaded panel. At first floor level there is a two light window set beneath a timber lintel fitted with leaded panels, one opening, the other fixed.

Of the east elevation of the first phase only the upper part is now visible due to the later addition. However, the quality of the ashlar is the same as on the other elevations indicating that although this has always been the rear of the house it was built with quality in mind. The only original opening visible is a two light window at attic level fitted with a modern timber frame comprising a two light lower part divided by a central mullion, the upper part a top opening two part top light, the lower bar of which forms a transom. The original mullion and transom window was replaced by the current owners in 1986 due to severe rot. At the same time an extra course of stone was added above the ridge-line of the outbuilding roof below thus raising the sill slightly reducing the overall height of the window opening. All of the frames are filled with leaded panes. The coping to the gable ends is identical to that of the south gable and the roof is covered with the same clay tile.

The north elevation comprises the gable end of the front part and the side portion of the rear wing, all constructed of the same, fine ashlar above a plinth (Figs 9 and 11).

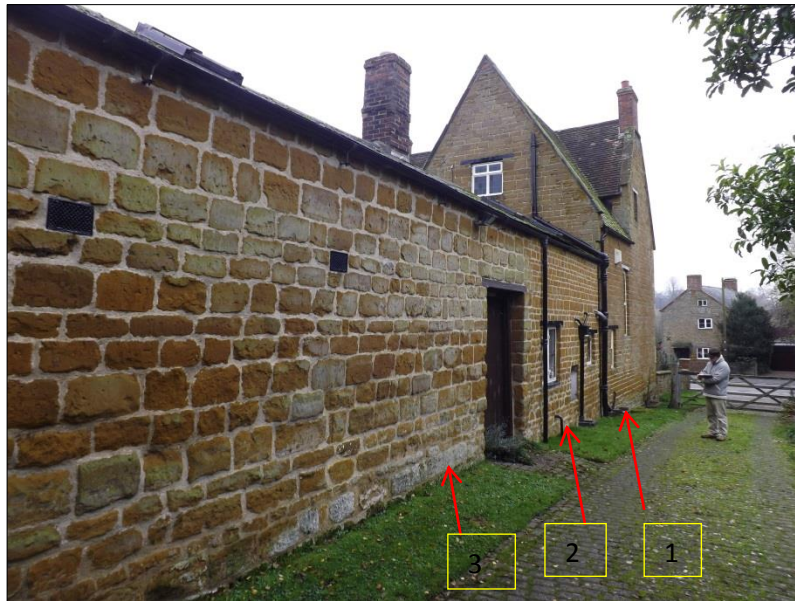


Fig 11: The north elevation of phases one, two and three from the north-east

At ground level the upper part of a light well can be seen to provide light to the cellar which lies beneath this end of the building (see below, Interior, Cellar). The gable wall of the front part of the house is as plain as the south elevation and, like it, has only a single window at attic level, a single fixed light of twelve leaded panes. The coping to the gable eaves is the same as before and there is a further patch of modern cement render which mirrors that on the south gable. There is a single brick stack, matching that on the south gable of nineteenth- to twentieth-century red brick topped by two modern clay pots.

A tall, narrow, window clearly lights the staircase and originally comprised three equal fixed lights of leaded panes set in timber, most probably oak. Now only the two upper thirds remain *in situ*, each filled with twenty leaded panes. The lowest third has at some time been infilled with relatively poorly laid stonework although some attempt has been made to match the courses of the original ashlar to either side. To the east of this staircase window, at ground level, is a two light window fitted with a modern two-light fixed panel.

Phase Two, exterior

A two-storey rectangular block was added against the rear (east) wall of the original house (Figs 9 and 11). On both the south and north walls where it joins the existing structure it can be seen that the stonework of the new addition was simply butted against and not cut into the structure of Phase One. The stonework of Phase Two is also of Northampton Sand with Ironstone, a similar colour but slightly less well dressed in ashlar blocks with a wider mortar joint. The entire east wall of this addition is built of red brick and is nineteenth-century in date (Figs 5 and 6).

The south elevation contains a doorway opening positioned in such a way that one jamb is formed by the east wall of the Phase One house (Fig 10). Within the door opening is a timber frame and vertically planked door with iron hinges and drop latch as well as modern locks set beneath a timber lintel. To the east is located a three light window set beneath a timber lintel fitted with three equal sized panels of twelve leaded panes each. This window opening has clearly been widened at some

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time although it is not clear when, but was in its current configuration when the property was purchased in 1985 by the present owners. The evidence for the widening is a change in the mortar and thin, awkward fillets of stone down either reveal on the external plane indicating secondary infilling as well as the fact that there are clear marks on some of the stonework where it has been saw-cut.

At first floor level there is a two light window fitted with two opening casements, one filled with a single pane of glass, the other twelve leaded panes. The roof of this addition is of a shallower pitch than on the original building and is covered in blue slate, a common material in the late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century once first canals and then, later, the railways allowed heavy building materials to be transported away from the source area, in this case most probably North Wales.

The east wall, which now forms one side of a cross passage, is built of red brick, laid methodically in three courses of stretchers then one of headers for the full height of the wall (English Garden wall Bond). The bricks are 230-235mm x 70mm x 110-115mm in size and rise 320mm in four courses. At the south-east the corner is formed of bull-nose bricks whilst the north-east corner is of standard bricks and the junction of this brick wall and the north and south stone walls are bonded with the bricks set neatly in a quoin fashion. Bull-nose bricks were not available before c1850 and were increasingly common during the years from 1860 onwards. A little below eaves height the bull-nosed bricks terminate neatly, so they form the rounded corner so often used to protect the wall-corner from damaging carriage-axes or protect livestock from a sharp arris. These suggest that the turn from the passageway into the garden may once have been considered sharp or abrupt for goods brought in or out, up to a height of some eight feet.



Fig 12 South-east corner of Phase Two showing bull-nose bricks and neat quoin joint

Towards the north-west corner of the cross-passage east wall is a small area of blocking, the purpose of which is unclear but may relate to a former flue situated on the inner side of this wall; it formerly had an iron bar lintel which is often used in flues where the heat would damage a timber piece. The opening is 650mm high and 500mm wide, 1.1m off the ground to its lower edge. At first floor level is

a door opening such as is usually described as a hayloft door and perhaps suggests that this addition to the main house was used on the ground floor as scullery/wash house with storage above.

Phase Three, exterior

The north wall of this addition is slightly more crudely built than the preceding stone elements. Although the stone has been dressed, the ashlar is not so cleanly cut at the edges (rough edges often suggest re-use) and is less well laid in larger blocks with wide mortar courses. Some of the stone is clearly re-used since pieces bears graffiti in positions which is unlikely to have been cut *in situ*, located just beneath the eaves. The scratched lettering of P B 1818 suggests it was not added by a member of the family that built the house since it is unlikely that they would put the initial of their surname (Parbery) first.

The east wall has been mostly re-built when the present garage was created in 1991 as has the south wall which includes two sets of hinged timber garage doors. The west wall, which forms the east side of the cross passage, is also of red brick but contains three sub-phases of work. The lower portion of the wall is original and is tied into the north and south walls, but without the use of the quoin effect seen in Phase Two. At roughly 1.5m from floor level there is a clearly re-built section of only three or four courses, bonded in lime mortar and above that a further section bonded in modern cement, presumably rebuilt when the garage was constructed. A doorway fitted with a timber frame and plank door formerly led into this structure but is now either locked from the inside or fixed shut; the interior of the garage was not accessed. The floor of the passage is formed of the same red brick as the wall, but laid on-bed.

Phase Four, exterior

This comprises a twentieth-century porch set against the south side of Phases One and Two but makes no physical relationship to Phase 3 (Figs 9 and 10). It was present when the property was purchased by the current owners. Constructed of painted timber, almost certainly pine, set on a low ironstone wall, the whole of the upper portion is fitted with leaded panels, as is the door at the east end, to allow maximum light both to the porch, and in the form of borrowed light, through the formerly external windows in the south wall of the two phases. It has a lean-to tiled roof.

The Interior

Phase One. Rooms have been allocated G - numbers.

G1. Currently used as a sitting room, it has a limestone slab floor which extends into the inglenook situated against the south wall (Figs 9 and 13). The scar of a former cross passage which extended from the front door to an interior door in the east wall can be seen faintly in the limestone surface. The existing front door appears to be a replacement and is painted on the interior surface. The windows are simply as previously described from the exterior, the splayed reveals of the window openings retain simple panelled shutters. The inglenook is spanned by a bressumer in what is probably elm, which is crudely finished and still retains a wayney edge in places. Carpenter's scribe marks and other incongruous working of the timber suggest that the bressumer may have been reclaimed from an older building. The interior of the inglenook appears to have been much altered

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and contains a modern wood-burning stove. In the south wall are two shallow niches which may be modern decorative features since they appear to be too shallow to serve any practical use. In the east side is a built-in seat set within the thickness of the east wall. Within the room the only feature which appears to be contemporary is the principal axial beam of chamfered oak with run-out stops; it is aligned north-south.



Fig 13 Room G1, the sitting room, looking south showing the inglenook

G2. Currently used as the dining room it is now entered through a door in the east wall but was originally accessed via a doorway in the south wall from the former cross passage (Fig 9). The room retains few historic features, the present fireplace is modern though in nineteenth-century style, the windows as previously described. The principal oak beam is aligned east-west, has chamfered edges and run out stops and the floor (over a cellar) is of oak as evidenced by the presence of medullary rays within the wood grain.

G3. The rear hall. Accessed originally through the back door set in the south wall and via the cross passage from the front door (Fig 9). It is partly floored with the same stone flags as G1. The rear hall was formerly divided by a wall on a north south axis set just to the east of the back door and the cellar door. The scar left by its removal can be seen on the south wall of the rear hall. A timber frame partition has been inserted in the rear hall to create G4. The back door appears to be the original back door, and although heavily varnished may be oak. It is ledged but not braced and retains various locks, latches and bolts of varying periods. It is hung on simple strap hinges. The narrow window to the east has been previously described. There is a door in the north wall (which is panelled in thin oak set in un-moulded frames) which leads down to the cellar (see below, G5). The door is standard nineteenth-century panelled door with modern hinges and handle.

G4. Currently used as a WC. There are no historic features within this room apart from the stone floor which was inserted by the current owners in around 2000 using reclaimed materials. This replaced a twentieth century concrete-tiled floor.

G5. The plain cellar is accessed via a flight of limestone steps which lead down from the rear hall into the single room situated beneath G2.



Fig 14: Door to cellar in north wall of G3, the rear hall, looking north-west; the blocked cellar window reveal is arrowed

Apart from the stone floor and underside of the timber floor of G2 above, the only feature is the window which is lit via the external light-well located against the north gable wall. On the staircase the blocked lower section of the tall staircase window, previously described, can be seen. The inner surface has been plastered and lime-washed, and it seems likely that although this blocking has removed any natural light from the cellar stairs, the window would have been blocked for security reasons. The only other feature within the cellar stair area is a small cupboard situated beneath the timberwork of the stairs above, the door of which is hung on simple butterfly hinges.

G6. An inserted doorway leads through the east wall of G3 to the present kitchen, G6, situated in the Phase Two addition (Figs 9 and 15). The door is a vertically planked door, ledged but not braced and fitted with a drop latch; it is hung on strap hinges. Within the kitchen there are almost no historic features apart from two small cupboards, probably originally for spice/salt, one each set within the north and south walls. Against the east wall are the brick cheeks of a fireplace with chimney flue above. None of the original fireplace opening survives, the arch having been raised to accommodate the present cooker. Around the north, east and west walls are modern kitchen units. The floor is of yellow brick which appears to be modern.



Fig 15: Room G6, the kitchen, looking east; note the larder (G7) corner at far left

G7. This is a larder/pantry formed by a single skin brick wall of L-shaped configuration built against the external face of the original house and the north wall of Phase Two (Fig 9). There are no historic features within the larder. It is notable however that the outer corner of the larder, within the kitchen, is formed of bull-nosed bricks, just as the outside wall corner of the range, perhaps suggesting that the creation of the larder is original to the Phase Two build.

The stairs (Fig 14) rise from the Hall (G3), to F1, the first floor landing (marked on Fig 9). They comprise simple oak treads and risers with plain square section balusters only at first floor level whilst there is a simple hand rail across the tall stairwell window in the north wall. The centre of the stair is boxed in with simple plain panelling, probably of twentieth-century date, around a softwood frame.

First Floor

F1. The landing is a simple, unadorned space with plain plastered walls apart from on the east side which is panelled in the same way as the stair panelling beneath (Fig 9). It appears to be twentieth-century in date, but may have replaced earlier panelling. Three doors lead into two bedrooms at the front of the house, and into a small lobby area (F4 and F5, see below) which presently provides access into the upper part of Phase Two, but which was almost certainly formerly a third small bedroom. The only historic feature is the window in the south wall, previously described.

F2. Currently the main bedroom, the only historic features are the principal axial beam over which retains a simple run-out stop and a nineteenth-century cast iron fireplace set against the south wall. The windows have previously been described.

F3. A second bedroom with similar features to F2.

F4. A small lobby/secondary landing which leads into Phase Two at first floor level and allows access to a cupboard beneath the second flight of stairs which lead up to the second-floor attic (Fig 9).

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There are no historic features apart from the window in the south wall, previously described from the exterior. A door leads into F5.

F5. Currently used as an airing/linen cupboard, not accessed, but viewed from the door opening which is fitted with a modern door. The interior of the space is fitted with shelving.

F6. An inserted doorway has been cut through the originally external east wall of Phase One to allow internal access into this first floor space of Phase Two (Fig 9). F6 therefore now simply acts as a small passage giving access to two further rooms, F7 and F8 (Fig 16). The only historic feature is the window in the south wall, currently subdivided on the line of the central mullion by a single skin brick wall.

F7. A small bathroom with no historic features although the formerly external face of the Phase One house can be seen, albeit beneath modern paintwork. The room is lit by a modern skylight.

F8. What appears in its first phase to have been an external store room accessed only via the high, 'hayloft' door visible from the cross passage at first floor level. It is now used as an office and accessed internally through a very low door (1.3m high to lintel level) cut through the former dividing wall (Fig 16). The only other feature is the upper half of the flue from the fireplace in the kitchen below (G6).



Fig 16: Room F6, passage with F7, bathroom, to the left and F8, study, through low inserted doorway

Second Floor

From the landing (F1) within the main house a second flight of stairs leads up to the attic level of the original house. It rises not above the ground to first floor level, but is positioned fully within the rear wing. There are no plans of the very basic attic level and so the two rooms have not been numbered, rather a simple descriptive text is presented here.

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The attic landing leads into a room set above F3 at the north end of the house. The room is lit by an original window in the north gable wall and the secondary, modern dormer in the west roof slope. The only visible historic features are the purlins of the roof; none of the rafters are visible. The south wall is located to divide the attic in two, on the line of the principal truss which has been infilled with what appears to be plasterboard (Fig 16). Within this partition wall is a doorway which leads into another bedroom located above F2. Apart from the original window in the south wall and the secondary dormer, only the purlins and the upper part of the chimney stack are visible.



Fig 16: The partition between the north attic bedroom and the dividing wall on the line of the principal truss, looking south into the other bedroom

The stairs rise within the north-east angle of the rear wing of the original house; they are made in the same way as the stairs from the ground floor. At attic level there is a landing lit by a window in the east wall, previously described. Beneath the window is a wooden seat set within the thickness of the wall.

Conclusions

The property can be separated into four distinct phases, each clearly visible both in materials, methods of construction and plan form seen most clearly on exterior surfaces. The current owners have restored the property sensitively using materials appropriate to the period and style of each phase. By paying careful attention to the building as it survives and preserving original features where possible, or replacing degraded features with appropriate fittings, the legibility of the separate elements of the house have been preserved whilst allowing the historic growth and alteration of the building to be observed.

- Phase one represents a well-built and finely proportioned example of a yeoman or merchants house of the late eighteenth-century, specifically bearing a date-stone of 1789. Documentation shows that it served its original owner and his purpose for only five years until his death. No malt-house, equipment or features can be related to this first use.

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- Phase two is a simple addition which appears to have been created to provide a separate food preparation and storage area, freeing the former kitchen with its large inglenook to be utilised as a second entertaining space. There is no indication that the first floor level of this phase was incorporated into the main house until relatively recently and was accessed only from the outside. This phase appears to date to the third quarter of the 19th century at the earliest from the incorporation of bull-nosed brick.
- Phase Three seems to have been added to provide further storage. It was present by 1883. It was later partly rebuilt (below) and incorporated a glasshouse which itself went through two phases of layout, as can be seen by the lime-wash marks (Many thanks to Mr Parry for providing access to this helpful photograph, which shows the numerous alterations previously carried out on this one phase of building).



- Phase Four comprises a simple lean-to porch added during the twentieth-century.
- The conversion in recent decades of the Phase Three outbuilding into a garage may now be seen as a fifth phase to the property's development.

The property remains an easily legible building, since all the foregoing alterations have left a clear mark on the previous fabric, and done so in a manner such that each relationship in turn is clear, such as butt joints and the use of distinctive materials. The availability of good maps and photographs helps the sequence to be understood.

The current works have provided an opportunity for a body of digital photographs of the property to be created, together with a black-and-white negative archive with related contact print for purposes of longevity.

With the permission of the homeowner, it is proposed that this report in due course be lodged with the Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record as a permanent record for public consumption, while digital copies be sent to the English Heritage OASIS on-line database for the widest possible public benefit and for future academic research purposes. The black and white negative archive, together with a disk containing the digital images, will be stored by IS Heritage pending the creation of the Northamptonshire Archaeological Archive, currently being prepared at Chester Farm, Wellingborough.

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IS Heritage, 27/12/2014