



Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd

Modern living in an historic environment

A building recording survey of former stables at The Plough, Everdon, Northamptonshire

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Summary

Recording showed that a small two-storey stone outbuilding at The Plough Inn, Everdon, was formerly a stable and coach house with hayloft above. Adjacent stand later brick probable former pigsties or privies. The main outbuilding appears to predate c1815 and has always served either the Plough Inn, or the farmhouse which preceded it.

Introduction

A building survey was undertaken at former stables to the rear of The Plough public house in the village of Everdon, Northamptonshire, NN11 3BL (NGR: SP 596 574; Fig 1) before conversion to a holiday-let by Mr and Mrs Hopewell (DA/2015/0963) and in response to a requirement from the Planning Authority (Condition 3). The survey conforms to Level 2 as defined by Historic England (formerly English Heritage) and was undertaken on 22 April 2016. The weather conditions were dry but overcast.



Fig 1. Site location within Everdon (Andy Isham after Lucinda Hudson Design).

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Full access was given to all of the rooms although most were filled to varying degrees by furnishings as at the time of the survey they were being used as *ad hoc* antique showrooms. Two joined brick-built rooms were being used to store wood and other items.

The buildings are not individually listed but fall within the curtilage of The Plough public house which is listed Grade II and is dated to the eighteenth-century (Historic England Statutory Listings). No mention is made in the listing description of the buildings which are the focus of this report.

Historical background

A search of documentary sources was confined to historic maps. The Ordnance Survey preparatory map of c1815 depicts the village and although the quality of the image is relatively poor there does appear to be a range of buildings located in the position of the present structure/s. These are both located on the east side of the main building, currently a pub but supposedly formerly a farmhouse (pers comm. Kim Hopewell).

On the 1885 First Edition Ordnance Survey map the configuration of the property is shown in the same layout as it remains today. The public house is named on that map as The Plough. The only variation is that the main block (the former stable block, see below) is bisected by a single line across the centre suggesting it was regarded as comprising two distinct parts. The level of mapping is insufficient to comment on the adjoining brick-built structures.

It is therefore suggested that the present layout was present at the beginning of the nineteenth century since a structure is shown on the c1815 map. The adjoining brick-built section was added prior to the 1885 edition, most likely during the second half of the century.

Building survey

The former stable block is a rectangular building aligned with its long axis almost exactly east-west (Fig 2). It comprises three rooms on the ground floor and a single space on the first floor accessed by an external flight of brick steps added later against the west end of the south elevation. A two part brick-built single storey addition abuts the east gable end.

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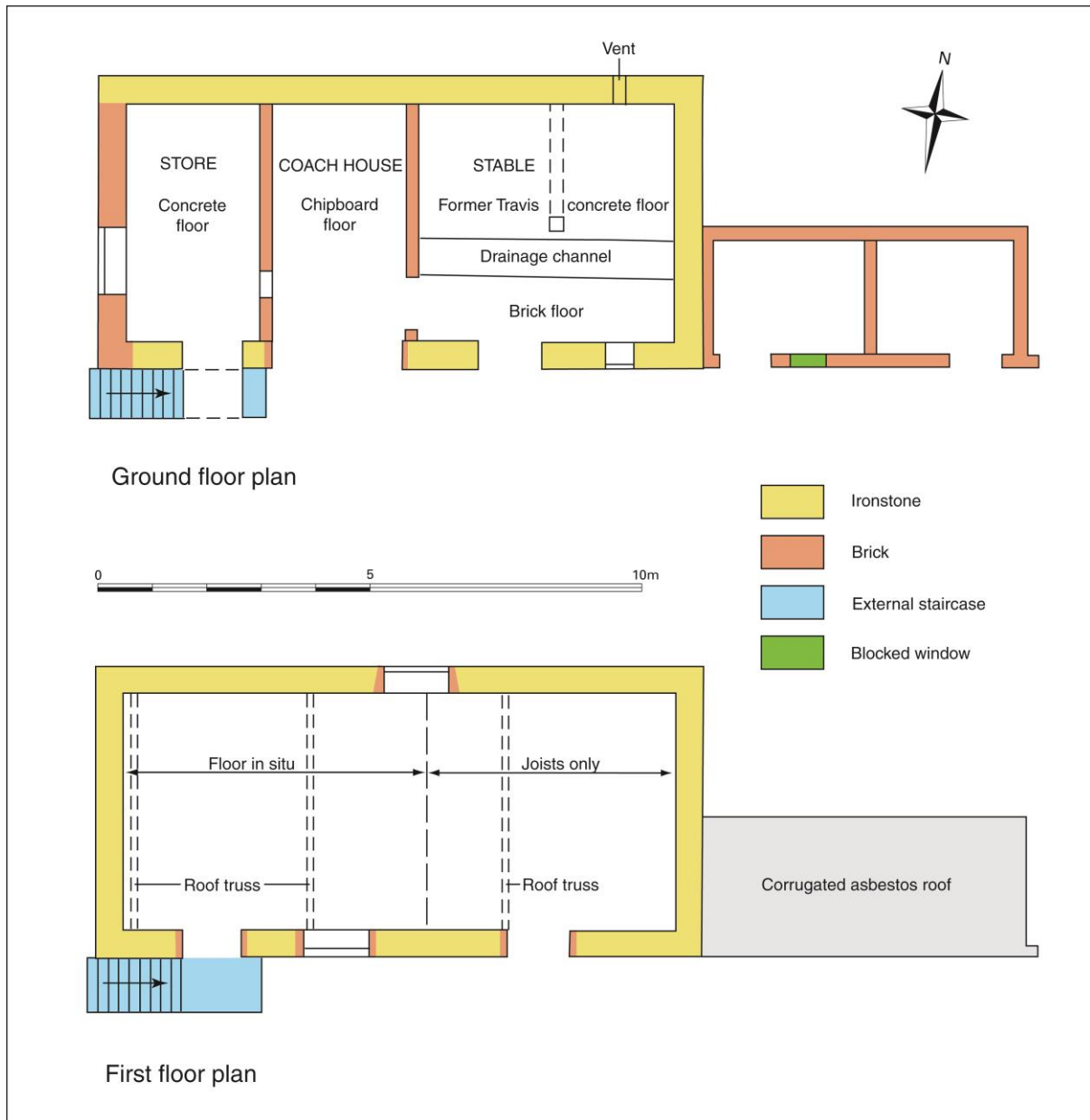


Fig 2. The ground and first floor plans of the buildings (Andy Isham after Lucinda Hudson Design).

The exterior

The building is constructed primarily of squared, coursed rubble using Northampton Sand with Ironstone, bonded in a soft, creamy white lime mortar on the north, east and south sides. The west gable end has been rebuilt in red brick including bullnose bricks at the south-west corner. At ground floor level there are three doorways in the south elevation. The central opening comprises a double-width doorway beneath a shallow brick arch which suggests that the central part was used as a coach- or cart-house (Figs 2 and 3). Two single pedestrian doors are located to either side and there is a small window towards the east end of the south elevation lighting the room at that end. At first floor level the south elevation contains two doorways and one window.

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Fig 3: The south elevation of the former stables and later brick sheds, looking north.

The west gable end contains a single window at ground floor level and is plain at first floor level. The window opening is fitted with a 24 pane fixed metal frame window beneath a concrete lintel. The rebuilt brick section is bonded into the ironstone wall with deliberate quoins for strength (Fig 4).



Fig 4: The west gable end and the north elevation looking south-east; 1m scale.

The north wall has no openings at ground floor level and a single window at first floor level, now obscured by ivy externally but visible from the interior.

The stone east gable end is entirely plain and has no windows or doorways nor is there any indication that there were ever any present. The single storey brick sheds are butted against, but not bonded with, this east elevation (Fig 5).

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Fig 5: The east gable of the former stables with the later brick-built sheds looking north-west. The rear of the public house is visible to the left; 1m scale.

The shallow pitched roof of the former stables is of blue slate whilst the single slope roof on the brick sheds is of corrugated asbestos sheet.

The former stables, ground floor

The ground floor comprises three rooms (Fig 2). They are described here from west to east and the names given are those of the author of this report.

The store room

Situated at the western end of the main block this comprises a simple rectangular space accessed by the pedestrian doorway in the south elevation (Figs 2 and 3). The door is a simple vertical plank door, ledged but not braced internally. There was formerly a small glazed panel in the upper part of the door, now infilled with timber sheet (Fig 6). There is a simple iron drop latch internally and iron strap hinges. The internal surface retains what may be late nineteenth-century paintwork but the exterior has been repainted.



Fig 6: The storeroom

There is a timber lintel above the doorway and all of the walls have been plastered and painted. The ceiling is of modern plasterboard sheet, the floor is of cement. The metal framed 24 pane window in the west gable wall has previously been described (see Fig 4). A small internal window was present between this room and the central coach house in the dividing brick wall (see Fig 6 upper left). It is fitted with zinc mesh suggesting its presence was for ventilation. To the immediate south of this is a simple wooden peg set in the east wall was most likely used for hanging bridles or harness on. There were no other original fixtures or fittings.

The coach house

This room comprises the central of the three ground floor rooms (Figs 2 and 3). It is entered through a double-width opening which extends the full width of the room beneath a shallow brick arch (Fig 7). The present doors and doorframe are modern and there is no scar on the brickwork of the jambs or arch to indicate the presence of an earlier doorframe. It is therefore possible that this coach house was formerly without doors.

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Fig 7: The coach house interior, looking south.

The north wall is constructed of ironstone, the two internal side walls are of red brick. All have been lime-washed. The internal jambs of the coach arch comprise bull-nose brick which suggests a date of c1850 or later for this structure. Since a building is indicated on the c1815 map it seems likely that the brick portions of the building are mid-century adaptations.

The floor is of modern chipboard; it is not known what flooring remains beneath. The ceiling comprises timber beams located above the east and west dividing walls the space between filled with square joists. The joists and underside of the floorboards above are lime-washed.

The stable

The stable occupies the eastern half of the ground floor (Figs 2 and 3). It is entered through a single pedestrian doorway in the south elevation. The present door and frame are modern replacements. To the east of the doorway is a small, single-pane fixed light window which also appears to be a replacement. The interior retains a section of red brick flooring along the south side of the room only. The bricks have been laid on their sides and show signs of wear in the doorway. To the immediate north of this, located east-west across the room, are the remains of a drainage channel for waste material and liquid; it is currently filled with gravel to level the floor surface. The eastern end of the channel was not visible where it joined the east gable wall due to the amount of stored

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items. It is not clear if there was originally a gully or channel through the wall at that point though this seems most likely as there is no sign of sign an exit in the internal dividing wall, nor would none be expected. On the north side of the room a slightly raised portion is laid to concrete; this was the location of two former stalls (Figs 2 and 8).



Fig 8: The stable interior showing brick flooring, gravel-filled drainage channel and raised stall area. Looking north.

The north, east and south walls are of ironstone the west internal, wall is of brick. All are lime-washed. There is a single, letterbox shaped, air vent in the north wall which serves the east stall; there is no vent serving the west stall.

The principal ceiling beam remains, aligned north-south across the room. Half-lapped onto either side are squared joists aligned east-west but no floorboards survive above them. The location of the single, central, traxis is indicated by an empty socket in the concrete floor of the raised area on the north side of the room. That empty socket presumably indicates the location of the former

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heelpost. There are no surviving indications of either hay racks or mangers nor are there any other fixtures or fittings.

The first floor

The first floor of this block comprises a single space now accessible via a flight of brick external stairs located at the west end of the south elevation (Figs 2, 3 and 9).



Fig 9: The external stairs, looking north; 1m scale.

The stairs are built of red brick bonded in lime mortar. They have bullnose bricks at the southern corners where the jambs of the addition form a porch to the west storeroom. The lintel above that porch is formed of a single slab of stone, perhaps York stone. Each tread is surfaced with embossed moulded blue engineering brick paviments to provide additional grip. The whole staircase is butted against, but not bonded with - the south elevation; its lowest step projects slightly beyond the west gable wall (Figs 2 and 9). A simple wrought-iron railing provides a handrail.

At the top of the stairs a single pedestrian door gives access to the first floor. Previously a second doorway situated towards the eastern end also provided access at this level (Figs 2 and 3). There is no staircase there and so it must be assumed that access there was provided by a ladder, perhaps on a seasonal basis when hay and straw were stored above the stable. Both doors are simple plank doors, ledged but not braced. The first floor was not accessed due the flooring being apparently unsafe. It was therefore viewed from the doorway only.

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The western half of the upper floor retains some floorboards but these were mostly covered by stored items. The eastern half of this level retains the principal tie beams and joists but no floorboards (Fig 10).



Fig 10: The first floor level looking north-east. Note lack of floorboards at the eastern end and ivy-covered window in the centre of the north wall.

The windows in the north and south walls are both of the same configuration. Each is a timber casement with one fixed and one opening light, each containing six panes. Both are situated beneath timber lintels. The doorway at the eastern end of this level was not accessible at this level due to the unsafe nature of the flooring.

The roof comprises three simple A-frame trusses each with a simple machine-sawn tie at eaves level and no collars within the truss. On each side of the roof is a single purlin, over which the rafters are laid. Secondary collars have been attached to the undersides of the purlins and it is assumed that a plaster ceiling was at one time fixed onto these; if so it has subsequently been removed.

The north, east and south walls are predominantly ironstone with red brick dressings around the window and doorway openings. The majority of the west wall comprises the re-built brick gable. All have been lime-washed in a variety of colours including white and pale green.

The brick sheds

A single storey two-roomed shed has been added against the east gable wall of the former stables (Figs 2 and 3). Built entirely of red brick it comprises two small rooms, but it is thought that they may have extended further to the east since a stub of brick protrudes from the south-east corner suggesting a further length of walling. Each room is accessed via doorways formed beneath shallow segmental arches in the south elevation and each is fitted with timber frames and two-thirds height doors (Fig 11). These doors and frames are modern replacements.

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Fig 11: The brick sheds looking north; 1m scale.

There is a blocked window to the western of the two rooms; it comprises a roughly square opening beneath a segmental arch. Above are two small air vents. The eastern room had no window. The size of the rooms and the heights of the doorways suggests that they may have been simple stores or perhaps pigsties, since they are too small to have been stables. It is also possible that at least one, or even both, may have been a privy.

The present roof is of corrugated asbestos sheet but there is no indication of the original roofing structure. The southern ridge is capped with re-used blue clay tiles.

Internally each was filled with stored items or firewood to such an extent that neither floor surface was visible.

Conclusions

The former stable block appears to be a relic of the time when the property was a farm. The main stable block is a simple vernacular building with no embellishment and is purely functional.

Constructed originally in local ironstone there has been extensive repair and alteration throughout. The most extensive repair has been the rebuilding of almost the entire west gable end in red brick, the date of which appears to have been undertaken during the second half of the nineteenth century as indicated by the use of bullnose brick on the south-west corner. The use of blue slate on the roof also suggests re-roofing at the same date since this material became widespread in the same period after the building of the railway network.

All of the doors and doorframes with the possible exception of the door to the west store are modern replacements. Only one section of brick floor survives, the remainder is either cement or modern boarding. It is thought that all of the windows are replacements.

The two brick sheds are present on the 1885 Ordnance Survey map indicating they were present at that date. Nothing survives from their original use.

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Internally little survives in the main block apart from a single hanging peg in the store room and indications in the floor of the eastern room to show that it had been a stable for two animals.

It is thought that the central room with the wide arched opening was originally open to the south and was used to store a coach or other wheeled vehicle, perhaps a simple farm cart.

In the single upper room nothing remains to suggest it was ever anything apart from a hay loft. The roof may have been replaced during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Glossary of architectural terms

Bull-nose brick – A brick with one rounded edge. Used primarily in agricultural buildings on corners, door and window jambs to prevent livestock damaging itself on sharp corners.

Collar – In a roof, a horizontal member tying together a pair of inclined members, usually a principal rafter, common rafters or sides of a truss

Gable – The triangular upper part of a wall supporting the end of a ridged roof.

Jamb – The side of a doorway, window or fireplace.

Lintel – A horizontal stone or timber beam spanning an opening and supporting the wall above.

Paviour – A purpose-made paving slab, often of hard-fired clay to provide a hardwearing surface. In the nineteenth century engineering brick was predominantly used from the mid-century onwards.

Purlin – A horizontal beam running parallel to the ridge of a roof and carrying the common rafters.

Quoin – The external angle of a wall or building, quoins or quoin stones are the dressed stones forming the angle. Where brick and stone is used the bricks can be laid in regular patterns to form the same.

Rafter - A sloping timber beam within the framework of a roof rising from the eaves to the ridge. Principal rafters are those which carry the purlins. Common rafters rest on the purlins and carry the laths supporting slates or tiles.

Segmental arch – A shallow arch comprising a segment of a larger radius.

Square coursed rubble – Walling of roughly dressed stone laid in courses.

Travis – The dividing barrier between two stalls within a stable, usually of timber.

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Appendix

OASIS data

Project Name	
OASIS ID	Iainsode1-251466
Project Type	Building Recording
Originator	Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd
Project Manager	Iain Soden
Previous/future work	No
Current land use	In use as a building
Development type	Domestic
Reason for investigation	Planning Condition
National grid reference	SP 596 574
Start/end dates of fieldwork	22 April 2016
Archive recipient	Northamptonshire Archive
Study area	c 150sq m



Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd

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