



# Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd

Modern living in an historic environment

**Level 2 archaeological buildings recording  
at 15 Kings Lane, Little Harrowden, Northamptonshire**

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# 15 Kings Lane, Little Harrowden

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## Level 2 archaeological buildings recording at 15 Kings Lane, Little Harrowden, Northamptonshire

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### Summary

15 Kings Lane, Little Harrowden is a tiny vernacular cottage dated before 1810 which for a while may have been part of a longer range. It has retained considerable character from original construction materials, most notably because those rustic elements have been smothered by modern coverings. Modern extensions outside the core have done nothing to enhance its historic character.

### Introduction

Mr A Pettit has received Listed Building Consent for the refurbishment and upgrading of his 18<sup>th</sup>-century cottage at 15 King's Lane, Little Harrowden, Northamptonshire (NGR: SP 8695 7150; Fig 1).



Fig 1: Site location (arrowed).

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## 15 Kings Lane, Little Harrowden

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15 King's Lane is a listed building, Grade II. Its entry from the National Heritage List is as follows:

LITTLE HARROWDEN KINGS LANE SP87SE (South side) 2/227 No.15 II

*House. Mid C18. Regular coursed ironstone, now painted, with C20 concrete tile roof. 2-unit plan. Single storey with attic. 2-window range of Lincolnshire eaves dormers with C19 casement windows. Central C20 porch. Gable parapet to right and brick stacks at ends. Interior not inspected but original roof structure may survive.*



Fig 2: The Ordnance Surveyors Edition Map of 1810, sheet 252. A building can just be made out (arrowed), approximately where 15 Kings Lane lies.

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Fig 3: First edition Ordnance Survey (1886) extract, Map 32SW, showing part of Little Harrowden. 15 Kings Lane is arrowed –at this date it may be part of a longer range.

Historic maps for Little Harrowden are few and although the village was mapped around 1810 for the Ordnance Surveyors (Fig 2), it was not until 1886 that the first detailed survey was produced (Fig 3). On both these maps a building can be discerned where 15 Kings Lane lies, although in 1810 the detail is too small to say more. In 1886 the building looks as if there was a south-eastern arm to the building, while another lies next door to the north-east. The merest vestiges of this latter (in alternate bands of ironstone and limestone) may survive in an adjacent boundary wall which separates no 15 from its neighbour.

### The Building

#### *Exterior*

15 King's Lane is based around the core of a small cottage built of roughly-coursed Northampton Sand with Ironstone, which has been mostly limewashed, and one gable rendered. Numerous rather flimsy extensions have been added to the northern end of the building in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century in an organic fashion. One of Fletton brick, with outshuts of timber and a UPVC conservatory. The core cottage has a modern slate roof (in a change from the existing list-description). A stone parapet surmounts the road-side gable with a small brick chimney stack at the apex. Another stack stands at the opposite end.

The Lincolnshire dormers are part of a move to insert a first floor where previously there was none. This can be seen in the numerous courses of different stonework added to the top of the long-axis walls.



Fig 4: West-facing roadside gable-end.



Fig 5: The north-east facing long axis. Note the blocked window beneath a timber lintel. A dashed line shows where the roof has been raised to create the first floor.





Fig 6: The southern gable and modern extension (G3 just visible) through outshut (G4)

To the south-eastern end has been added a sequence of modern extensions, all single-storey. The first was of Fletton-type brick, under a flat asphalt roof and appears to have been added during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, followed by an out-shut and a UPVC conservatory on a dwarf brick wall. Scars on the edge of the exposed gable above suggest that there may once have stood another building here, with a pitched roof of a height similar to the current core building. This is also suggested by the 1886 Ordnance Survey depiction (above).



Fig 7: The south-western side and modern conservatory (G5)

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## *Interiors*

### Ground Floor

A simple stone-built porch with timber canopy opens into a two-room ground floor interior which has a mixture of brick and concrete screed floor (G1 and G2), although the secondary partition which divided up the two rooms has been lost (the scar remained visible).

The ground floor interior is lit by windows in both long axes and one in the road-side gable, all timber casements, while a fourth window has been blocked up which faced the entranceway adjacent to the porch. On the interior this is now a recess containing shelves.



Fig 8: Blocked north-facing window in G2 – shelves on the inside; Scale 1m





Fig 9: Former inglenook in G1, narrowed for access through on right; Scale 1m



Fig 10: Inserted corner fireplace in G2; scale 1m

The former division of the interior into two rooms is not original but is the result of an inserted timber partition, now gone. G1 was lit by a former inglenook which had been narrowed considerably to form a very narrow, constrained passageway through to the modern extensions (Fig 9). A rustic partition divides the passageway from the heat source of the inglenook, which was retained, but still with a separate, smaller fireplace in it (since lost). A narrow winding stair rises through 180-degrees at the side of the inglenook to reach the first floor bedrooms.

Meanwhile G2, when it was separated off, was provided with an inserted corner fireplace, which survives (Fig 10).

The narrow passageway adjacent to the inglenook leads into a late 20<sup>th</sup>-century kitchen (G3) with an adjacent bathroom later created out of one end. The basic structure is Fletton brick with a tiled floor and a flat roof, but the entire ensemble lacks any fixtures or fittings which are historic.

G4 is a simple out-shut or lean-to, built of various materials but which looks a very temporary structure indeed. G5 is a brick-mounted UPVC conservatory of likely 1980s or 1990s vintage. None of G3, G4 or G5 have either historic value or architectural merit.

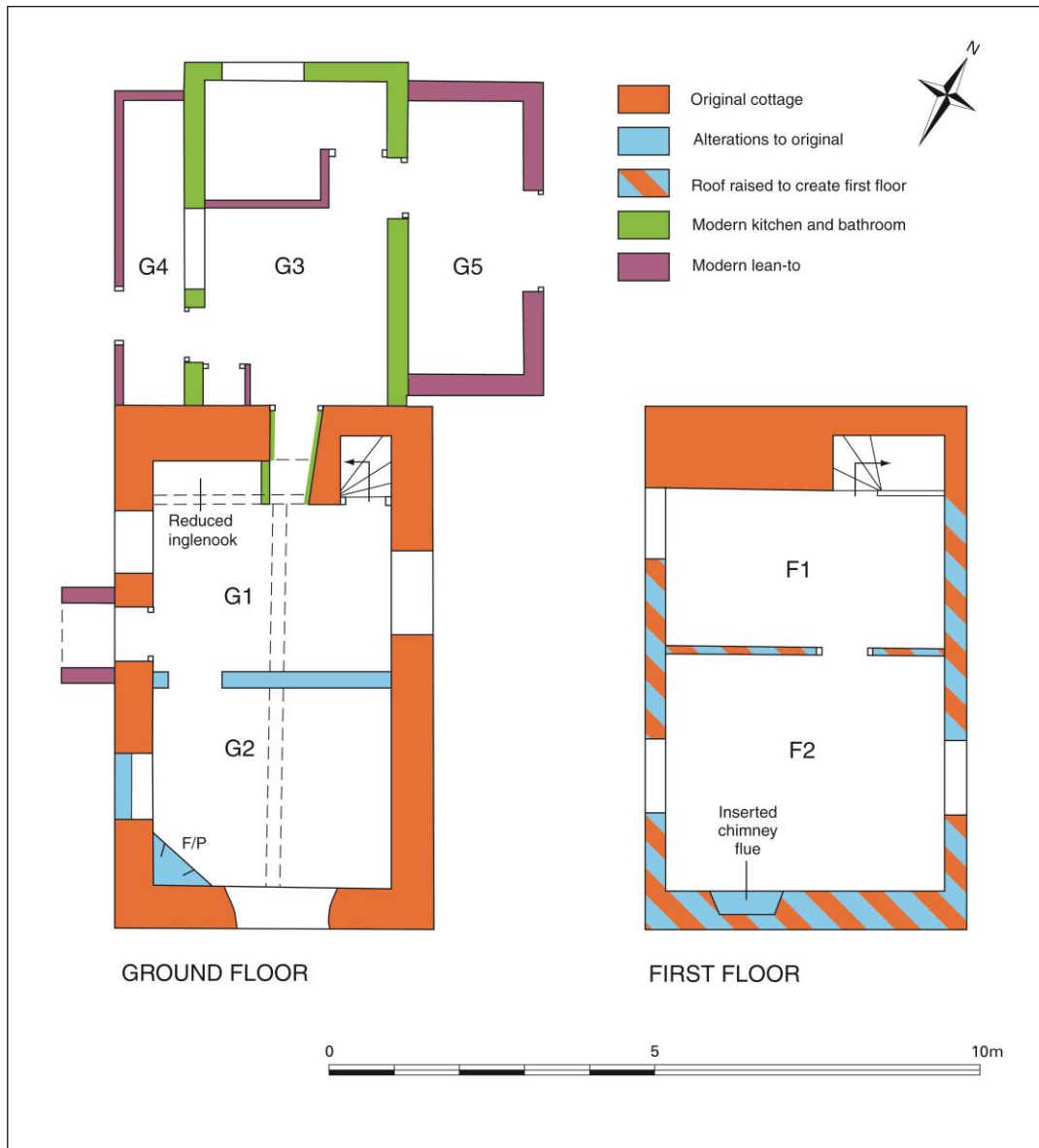


Fig 11: Plan of the building, phased (Andy Isham)

## First Floor

Access to the first floor is via the very constrained winder stair at the side of the narrowed inglenook. This is probably the original stair location, although the timberwork has all been replaced or repaired.

The upstairs space is divided into two small bedrooms of unequal sizes. F1 contains the thicker end wall which is derived from the inglenook canopy and which narrows to form a pronounced shelf along the wall, a characteristic of many inglenooks. F2, is slightly bigger but just like F1 is devoid of detail. Both rooms have been created when the roof was raised. Prior to that they may have been a single, windowless storage space. In the end gable of F2 is a gap where some plaster is missing which has exposed an inserted brick flue. This serves the inserted corner fireplace in G2 below.

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Both rooms have been finished off by the plastering of the roof timbers and the spaces in between. This has created a knob of plaster around a series of knots and ties, made with natural fibres and which formerly held the thatched roof in place. The plaster preserves their individual shapes and sizes.

Above the bedrooms a ceiling had been inserted which was made of reed-plaster. It was subsequently under-drawn with modern plaster-board. The whole thing had sagged and massively collapsed in F2, exposing more of the former thatch-remnants and a glimpse of the common rafters which, as the bedroom-render suggests, are all waney-edged branches, almost straight off the tree.

A modern pine set of rafters has been placed above these to support the current slate roof.



Fig 12: Looking north-west across F2.



Fig 13: The rendered knots of former thatch-ties in the roof

### Conclusions

This tiny historic building, for long a little-altered cottage, has reached a watershed and sensitive upgrading is long overdue. There are extensive vestiges of former characteristics, such as a thatched roof, but the quality of the materials previously used is rustic and of great historic interest but of limited architectural merit.

The cottage itself has undergone a number of major changes in an effort to retain its character, but none have been of high-quality materials or workmanship. None are datable. The character has survived perhaps *despite* as much as *because of* the attentions meted out to it.

The core building remains a testament to the most basic 18<sup>th</sup>- to 19<sup>th</sup>-century agricultural labourers' accommodation.

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## Appendix

### *OASIS data*

Project Name	15 Kings Lane, Little Harrowden
OASIS ID	iainside1-290484
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	Residential
Reason for investigation	Planning Condition (LBC)
National grid reference	SP 8695 7150
Start/end dates of fieldwork	13 July 2017
Archive recipient	Northamptonshire Archive
Study area	100 sq m



Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd

24 July 2017