Historic building recording at Cheverells Farm, Titsey, Surrey

NGR: TQ 3951 5654

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Report to J P Whelan Homes Ltd

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Summary statement

Cheverells Farmhouse is a Grade II Listed Building. Under statutory regulations pertaining to listed structures, the local planning authority has asked for historic building recording to be undertaken in advance of renovation of the structure. This condition is required to secure appropriate recording of the archaeological impact of the development.

J P Whelan Homes Ltd has asked C K Currie of CKC Archaeology to undertake work in order to satisfy the above regulations.

Cheverells Farm appears to have begun its life as a two bay late medieval hall house with two-storey (floored) bays at both ends. It was converted into a fashionable hearth passage house, probably in the mid-late 16th century. There is evidence that the original floor level in the service end was raised. This may have coincided with the digging of a cellar under the hall wing. In the 17th-century a kitchen wing was added on the NE side, with evidence in the roof of later, undated remodelling. At some unspecified time a brick façade was added to the original timber-framed building. There is evidence that the house was refurbished internally in the 18th century. In the 19th century at some time before 1870, the old solar wing at the NW end was taken down and a new extension added, largely completing the building up to the time of recording.

Internally a number of early features survive. The crown post roof of the open hall is largely as originally built, with the full-height smoke blackened closed trusses of lathe and daub remaining intact. There are a number of early doors surviving within the former hall wing. The hinge types seem to date these to two phases: plank doors dating from the 17th-century phase, and panel doors from the 18th-century refurbishment.

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This report has been written to guidelines laid down by English Heritage in appendix 2 'Project design specification' in *The management of archaeological projects* (London, revised edition, 1992). The ordering of information, and the information given, follows the guidelines given within this document. Additional guidance was taken from the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (1996), where considered appropriate. All work is carried out according to the *Code of Conduct* of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, of which CKC Archaeology is an IFA-registered archaeological organisation (reference: RAO no. 1).

1.0 Introduction

Cheverells Farmhouse is a Grade II Listed Building. Under statutory regulations pertaining to listed structures, the local planning authority has asked for historic building recording to be undertaken in advance of renovation of the structure. This condition is required to secure appropriate recording of the archaeological impact of the development.

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2.0 Historical background

Cheverells Farm is an isolated farmstead in the NW corner of the parish of Titsey, near its border with Chelsham. The area is characterised by its dispersed settlement and isolated farms (Currie 2000). The farmhouse itself dates back to late medieval times when a timber-framed hall house was erected on the site. This has been altered and added to on a number of occasions, and now contains fabric from *circa* the 15th through to the 19th/20th century.

Cheverells seems to have taken its name from the family of Adam de Chivaler, who is recorded living in the area in the Subsidy Roll of 1332 (Gover *et al* 1934, 338). The name of the farm first occurs in a rental of Titsey manor of 1401, when John de Berne held land there.

'De Johne atte Berne pro uno messuagio x acris terrae et 1 pecia terrae subtus le Grove cum le Hawe apud Chivaleres...' (Leveson Gower in SAC iii, 138).

The farm was reckoned the site of manor within the parish of Titsey. It was in the possession of the Uvedale family by 1528, and remained with them until the early 17th century (Drucker 1912, 333). From 1623 it passed through a number of hands. Deeds mentioned in an Abstract of Title tracing the ownership of the property from 1623 to the 1770s (SHC 2186/14/13) refer to the farm as a 'capital messuage' and 'manor house' with 340 acres of land attached to it. By the 19th century it had become part of the Leveson Gower estate. At some time in the mid 19th century they undertook a rebuilding of the farm buildings. Plans in the Surrey History

Centre refer to a 'new homestead' at Cheverells, but unfortunately only those relating to the outbuildings survive (SHC 2186/31/7-10). It was possibly at this time that the NW wing was rebuilt, removing earlier fabric to do so.

At the time of the survey the timber-framed medieval structure was in a perilous condition, with part of the roof having been condemned as dangerous by an engineer prior to the author's site visit. The two later wings were in reasonable condition, and were being renovated by builders. It is hoped to similarly renovate the medieval section once it has been recorded and made safe.

3.0 Strategy

The strategy is outlined in the project design (Currie 2001). A copy can be seen in the Surrey County Council Sites and Monuments Record (SMR).

The reader should be aware that the part of the building to be recorded was condemned as unsafe by an engineer, and this led to restricted access to some parts of the building. This should be taken into consideration when reading this report. In particular, the drawings should not be regarded as 100% accurate. The SCC brief required internal elevations to be drawn of the SE gable. Access to the roof space and parts of the upper floors adjoining this area was not possible, and measurements had to be taken via a number of indirect means. This also applied to the southern end of the SW internal elevation. With regard to the external SE elevation, initial readings were taken from scaffolding, but when these came to be checked, the scaffolding had been removed as part of safety precautions ordered by the engineer. Checking could therefore only be undertaken from ground level.

4.0 Results

4.1 General description

A general description is best served by repeating the summary given in the Department of the Environment's listing, published in 1984. This states:

'House C16 core with C18 remodelling and C19 additions. Timber framed with brick cladding and flint in end wall to left, rendered with tile hanging above to right; plain tiled roofs, half hipped to left, raised and hipped to right. End stacks to left and the right. 2 storeys. Gable front wing projecting to left, C19 range to right. 2 sash windows across first floor of right hand range, one cambered head casement on left hand wing. Half glazed planked door to right in pentice roof porch with corrugated plastic and glass on brick walls. Further door to angle of left wing in pentis (*sic*) roofed half glazed porch. Tile hung to rear' (DoE 1984, Tandridge no 3/283).

This is perhaps not the clearest of the DoE descriptions, but it was doubtless made when much of the fabric was hidden behind tile hanging or render that covered most of the exterior walls. As there is no mention of the interior, it might be assumed that the inspector did not gain access or one might expect some reference to the planked and panelled early doors that

are present. This might also account for the apparent failure to recognise the structure as a late medieval hall house that was possibly earlier than the 16th century.

4.2 The hall wing

The current farmhouse at Cheverells Farm presents three main parts (the hall wing, a kitchen wing and a 19th-century NW wing), with a number of subsidiary alterations. The SE, or hall, wing is the oldest. This is a timber-framed building later encased in brick and tile hung. The latter feature helping to conceal the numerous minor alterations visible once the tile hanging was removed. The SE elevation beneath the tile hanging comprises a brick ground floor. There is evidence of the bay posts in the gable having been cut short just below present first floor level. The upper storey and gable exhibit a later (unpegged) studded timber frame infilled with brick.

Little of the frame shows on the SW elevation, being almost entirely replaced or hidden by brickwork. A straight joint in the brickwork is clearly visible between the end bay and the rest of this wing, with brick blocking for a door to the NW of it. It comprises an irregular Flemish Bond of alternate stretchers and headers laid in courses. There is also an area of disturbed brickwork to the SE of the straight joint relating to a now removed chimney stack contemporary with the wall. This served only the first floor: the fireplace opening and hearth remained at the time of the survey. This stack stands on a recess in the cellar, the recess, stack and wall all being of a single phase.

This part of the house began its life as a two bay medieval hall house with at least one floored bay on each end. The roof is of a crown post construction with four way up-bracing to the open crown post and up-braces to the hall (only) and down-braces to the closed trusses¹. The surviving brace to the central truss has chamfered edges, and this profile continues along the bottom of the tie where it is cut out of the solid beam. Both closed trusses have the upper face to the hall indicating that the building originally continued at both ends. The fact that there are no mortices in the crown posts for braces to the collar purlin in either of the floored bays suggests that the roof was fully hipped and therefore both floored ends were of a single bay. The collar purlin has burned through near the SE end, but half the roof remains complete, and there is no evidence of a smoke louver² in any part of the hall. The original smoke-blackened, nailed lathe and daub survives on both closed trusses, with similar deposits over the roof timbers.

On the NE side of the roof there is evidence of a leaking roof near eaves level possibly before the present kitchen wing was added. Here water seems to have got into the roof to affect the rafters of the SE bay over the hall. The bottom of the fourth rafter (from the SE end) is badly rotted, with that to the SE of it having its lower 0.5m sawn off, possibly because it was rotted. Two rather flimsy pieces of timber were then attached to either side of

¹ Rigid transverse framework constructed across a roof at bay intervals, to prevent the roof from spreading and to carry longtitudinal timbers that support common rafters. A closed truss is one in which spaces between the timbers are filled, as between rooms and at the end of a building (Alcock *et al* 1996, G19).

² Opening in the ridge of a roof for the escape of smoke from an open hearth (Alcock et al 1996, G11).

the rafter, fixing it back on to the wall plate. Similar damage can be seen further NW along this line of rafters, possibly suggesting a narrower wing on the NE side originally.

Although the upper end of the hall has been removed the dais beam³ survives fossilised in the north wall of the open hall. This has a moulding similar to the low-end dais, but slightly stretched owing to the greater depth of the beam. The upper bay has been lost, but the mortices for joists illustrate that it both existed and was floored. This beam is likely to reveal additional information as building work progresses. The north side of the crown post of this wall has no mortice for a brace to the collar, but does have an unpegged mortice at the level of, and similar to, the housing for the inserted first floor ceiling over the hall bay.

Attached to the south end of the hall is a third bay, now with a half-hipped gable end. The wall-plates of the main hall continue into this bay demonstrating that it is original. Original gable bay posts, tie beam (no access to the top to look for rafter-feet housings) and part of the mid gable post also survive. Above wall-plate level the roof has been replaced with butt purlin butt-rafter construction. This form of roof fell out of use in the mid 18th century, but may be earlier in this instance. On the SW side, the purlin has become detached from the roof of the hall, causing the roof to lean south-eastwards. Only one spreader exists at mid point in the roof. This would appear to be a reused timber inserted to support an ailing roof.

On the ground floor the cross-beam between hall and floored end has mortices for a pair of central doors indicting that this was the service end of the house. The cross-beam has simple tenon housings for a floor but the original joists have been cut out and the floor is now lodged on top of the beam. These later joists are smaller than the originals, but are still laid flatways. The cross-beam has a simple dais moulding along its length.

A straight joint seen in the exterior brickwork suggests that the brick cladding to this bay is later than the brick cladding to the hall. All the above features suggest that the SE bay has undergone a number of complex changes, the exact sequence and dating of which is not entirely clear.

With the removal of the wall plaster in the northern upstairs room of the former hall, two doorheads can be seen cut into the tie beam in the northern gable of the hall. This shows that there was a two storey structure on the north end of the hall prior to the present Victorian extension. This accords with the observation that the timbers on the NW side are not flush with the gable, indicating that it was not supposed to be an outside wall. The cutting of doors under the tie beam suggests that this was also a later addition that probably occurred at a later date after the hall was divided into two floors.

It is possible that the hall was floored in the mid-to-latter part of the 16th century when a brick chimney was inserted alongside the former cross passage. The insertion of the stack turned the hall into a hearth passage house, a plan type known from the mid-late 16th century. Brick blocking on the SW elevation shows a possible position for the main door, and there is some tentative evidence in the form of a rebate on the bay post on the opposite side for the opposing door to a cross entry. The ground cill survives in the location of the promulgated

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³ Decorated beam at the top of the partition at the upper end of a hall (Alcock *et al* 1996, G6).

east doorway. In this wall plate there is an inward facing mortice for a timber projecting into the hall a door's width from the bay post. This may have formed the base of a spere⁴

Below the SE bay of this wing is a flint lined cellar of post-medieval date. It is uncertain when this was added. At some date after the construction of the SE bay the first floor level was raised.

All the present windows in the hall wing appear to be of casement type. No original window locations were revealed during the works.

4.3 The kitchen wing

The brief only required a detailed study of the hall wing. This wing is only given a summary description here. It appears to date from the 17th century as the floor joists are of light scantling oak and the general character is of that date. However, the roof takes a different character and is of sawn softwood with queen posts and collar suggesting a mid 18th century date.

The outer walls are of masonry and there is no clear evidence of earlier timber framing. The beam supporting the wall under the eaves of the main roof shows no sign of having had a wall under, which suggests that the outshut is contemporary with the range. Additionally the arrangement of beams suggests that the main pitch may once have been narrower (to the middle beam), and the outshut correspondingly wider. Increasing the size of the first floor room may explain why the roof appears to have been reconstructed.

The lower part of the NW gable is of flint with a narrow brick plinth detail. The single storey outshut, with catslide roof, is broadly similar but has a different plinth detail from the left-hand side of the stack. The upper part of the NW gable is now of brick. The present chimney, judging from the newness of the bricks, is later, probably replacing an earlier stack.

The NE wall of this wing is entirely of brick over a brick plinth. It is of Flemish bond externally but of English bond internally, and is formed of standard bricks with blue headers in 19th century fashion. The quoins of the gable were rebuilt with this section. The casement windows have flattened round heads, and there is the scar of a porch around the entrance door. Rotted rafters on the NE side of the hall suggest that the NE wing may have once been narrower, but it is uncertain how it was subsequently enlarged, and which parts are original, if any.

The SE wall shows a blocked door in the outshut wall. Elsewhere any further evidence is covered by concrete render or tile hangings.

4.4 The NW wing

As argued in section 4.2, it is certain that there was a medieval solar in this position. This may have survived until the present wing replaced it. This appears to be of later 19th- century

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⁴ A short screen, usually between a doorway and a fireplace (Alcock et al 1996, G16).

date. It is made of brick with a plain tile roof. The upper storey was tile hung, with the lower half covered in concrete render. The present works removed a porch over the door on the SE side, as can be seen from scarring on the wall. This porch is not shown on early Ordnance Survey plans, and so can be assumed to be a 20th-century addition.

5.0 Discussion

Cheverells Farmhouse appears to have begun its life as a hall house with a floored solar end on the NW side, and another floored low-end bay on the SE side. There is documentary evidence to suggest that the building was considered to be a small manor, within the larger manor of Titsey, at one time, although there is little in the surviving structure to suggest exceptional status. A moulded low-end cross-beam on the inside of the SE wall of the hall might be seen as a high-status feature. There is nothing to suggest the structure was put up before the 15th century, when it was probably occupied by a prosperous tenant farmer. However the site was probably occupied from at least the high medieval period. The medieval farm appears to have been sufficiently prosperous to have survived the Black Death and varying economic fortunes of the later 14th century, until prosperity began to return in the 15th century. Although the house had manorial status it seems to have been a tenanted property throughout its documented history. By the early 16th century it was part of the Uvedale estate, who had their main residences elsewhere.

The isolated nature of the farm is entirely in keeping with the dispersed settlement pattern of the area. It is thought that scarcity of water on the high downs here restricted the development of nucleated communities (Currie 2000). It is possible that the rebuilding of the farm in the later medieval period may have owed something to prosperity obtained from sheep farming, which is still practiced on the farm today. It then went through a number of changes, developing into the present structure.

The main phases of the building seem to be as follows:

- 1. Hall of two bays with two floored ends, divided service, cross-entry and possible speres. Both the upper and lower ends had (matching) dias beams with simple mouldings. There were no obviously early features within this structure so it was probably built in the 15th century.
- 2. Insertion of the chimney stack and flooring of the hall turning it into hearth passage house. Probably mid-late 16th century. The fashionable style of this type of house might reflect the property's manorial status.
- 3. Cellar dug below SE bay. Brick skin added to house, possibly at same time.
- 4. First floor level changed. This may have been in the early 17th century. Many of the plank doors on the upper floor survive, and these may date from this change of level. The strap hinges of these doors are of a type common in the earlier part of the 17th century (Alcock & Hall 1994, 21-5). The kitchen wing may also date from this period, or slightly later.
- 5. The house seems to have been refurbished internally in the 18th century by the insertion of the dining room fireplace and two of the panelled doors, at least one

- having 18th-century L-hinges. Roof in the kitchen wing may have been altered around this time.
- 6. The next major change seems to have been in the 19th century when the NW bay was taken down and the current wing put in its place. At this time, the upstairs doors in the former NW hall gable were blocked with pine posts, and the wall plastered over.
- 7. Minor changes in the 20th century include the addition of a porch on the north end of the SW elevation, and possibly those (now gone) on the north side of the building. None are shown on the 1870 or 1896 OS 25" plans.

It was hoped that 19^{th} -century map might throw light on the form of the original structure at the NW end of the building. Unfortunately, the Titsey tithe survey was carried out at too small a scale to be useful (SHC P12/1/7-8). All this shows is an L-shaped building. Plans in the Leveson Gower Collection suggest that the entire farmstead was remodelled in the 19^{th} century. Although these only show plans and elevations of outbuildings, the overall title claiming to show details of the 'new homestead' suggests that the 19^{th} -century range was added around this time (SHC 2186/31/7-10). The Surrey History Centre catalogue dates these plans to the mid or late 19^{th} century, but evidence from the 1^{st} edition OS 25" plan suggests that the present NW wing had already been added by c. 1870 (sheet XXVIII.1).

6.0 Conclusions

Cheverells Farm appears to have begun its life as a two bay late medieval hall house with two-storey (floored) bays at both ends. It was converted into a fashionable hearth passage house, probably in the mid-late 16th century. There is evidence that the original floor level in the service end was raised. This may have coincided with the digging of a cellar under the hall wing. In the 17th-century a kitchen wing was added on the NE side, with evidence in the roof of later, undated remodelling. At some unspecified time a brick façade was added to the original timber-framed building. There is evidence that the house was refurbished internally in the 18th century. In the 19th century at some time before 1870, the old solar wing at the NW end was taken down and a new extension added, largely completing the building up to the time of recording.

Internally a number of early features survive. The crown post roof of the open hall is largely as originally built, with the full-height smoke blackened closed trusses of lathe and daub remaining intact. There are a number of early doors surviving within the former hall wing. The hinge types seem to date these to two phases: plank doors dating from the 17th-century phase, and panel doors from the 18th-century refurbishment.

7.0 Copyright

C K Currie (trading as CKC Archaeology) shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports or other project documents written by himself or his agents, under the *Copyright*, *Designs and Patents Act* of 1988 with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client, the local planning authorities and the Surrey Domestic Buildings Research Group for the use of such documents by them in all matters directly

relating to the project as described in the project design, as well as for *bona fide* research purposes.

8.0 Archive

The archive for this work has been deposited with a repository recommended by Surrey County Council. Copies of the report were lodged with the client, the Surrey County Council Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) at Kingston-on-Thames, the Surrey Domestic Buildings Research Group, Surrey History Centre, Woking, the Surrey Archaeological Society Library, at Castle Arch, Guildford, and the National Monuments Record in Swindon, Wiltshire.

9.0 Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks are given to all those involved with this project. Alan Wickham of J P Whelan Homes Ltd provided all the plans and arranged access. Access was further assisted by the site agent, Mr Trevor Stratford, who together with the site Contracts Manager, Tom Skilton, discussed the structure with the author. Neil Rushton of Trinity College, Cambridge assisted the author with the surveying, and provided some of the illustrations to this report. Martin Higgins, the Historic Buildings Adviser to Surrey County Council monitored the work, and provided advice and discussion. He also provided his own detailed notes on the building for incorporation into this report, for which the author is extremely grateful, and duly acknowledges his intellectual and professional input herein.

10.0 References

Abbreviations used:

DoE Department of the Environment OS - Ordnance Survey SAC - Surrey Archaeological Collections

10.1 Original sources at the Surrey History Centre (SHC):

SHC 2186 Leveson Gower Collection

SHC 2186/14/1-25 Deeds for the manor of Cheverells 1693-1779 SHC 2186/31/7-10 Plans for outbuildings to the 'new homestead' at Cheverells, mid 19^{th} century?

Maps:

SHC P12/1/7-8 Titsey tithe survey, 1843 OS 25" plan sheet XXVIII.1 (*c.* 1870 & 1896 editions)

10.2 Original sources in print

I Margary (ed), 250 years of map making in Surrey, Lympne, 1974

S Wood, Domesday Book. Surrey, Chichester, 1975

10.3 Secondary sources

N W Alcock & L Hall, *Fixtures and fittings in dated houses 1567-1763*, Council for British Archaeology: York, 1994

N W Alcock, M W Barley, P W Dixon, & R A Meeson, *Recording timber-framed buildings:* an illustrated glossary, Council for British Archaeology: York, 1996

C K Currie, An archaeological and historical assessment of a proposed Area of Special Historic Landscape Value (ASHLV) at Chelsham, Surrey, unpublished 3 volume report to Surrey County Council and the Surrey Archaeological Society, 2000

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Department of the Environment, List of buildings of special architectural or historic interest. District of Tandridge, HMSO, London, 1984

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English Heritage, The management of archaeological projects, London, 1992, revised edition

J E B Gover, A Mawer, & F M Stenton in collaboration with A Bonner, *The place-names of Surrey*, Cambridge, 1934

G Leveson Gower, 'Notices of the family of Uvedale of Titsey, Surrey and Wickham, Hampshire' *Surrey Archaeological Collections*, 3 (1870?), 63-192

Institute of Field Archaeologists, Standard and guidance for archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures, IFA 1996

Appendix 1: catalogue of photographs taken

Photographs were taken in both colour slide and monochrome print. In the archive the colour slides are prefixed with the site code, followed by 'S' to indicate photograph type, eg (Site Code - CF)/S/* (* indicating the photograph number). Monochrome prints are number (CF)/M/*, following the same procedure as for slides.

- 1. SW elevation from S
- 2. ditto
- 3. SE elevation from SE
- 4 ditte
- 5. NE elevation from N
- 6. ditto
- 7. NW elevation from NW
- 8. ditto
- 9. Ground Floor SE room tie beam cut through by windows from N
- 10 ditto
- 11. Looking down into cellar from N
- 12. ditto
- 13. Fireplace from S
- 14. ditto
- 15. Plank door of cupboard under stairs from SW
- 16 ditte
- 17. Ground Floor NW room, fireplace from N
- 18. ditto
- 19. 1st floor, SE room, looking SE
- 20. ditto
- 21. Plank door from SE
- 22. ditto
- 23. 1st floor, S room, S corner post from N
- 24. ditto
- 25. SW corner post and tie beam from NE
- 26. ditto
- 27. Plank door from SW
- 28. ditto
- 29. 1st floor, door into cupboard behind stack from E
- 30. ditto
- 31. 1st floor, door into passage from SE
- 32. ditto
- 33. 1st floor, NW room, SE wall and fireplace from NW
- 34. ditto
- 35. NW wall from S
- 36. ditto
- 37. NW wall, close up of remains of E door cutting tie beam from SE
- 38. ditto
- 39. NW wall, close up of remains of W door cutting tie beam from S
- 40. ditto
- 41. Roof, looking to NW gable from SE, below collar beam
- 42. ditto
- 43. Roof, looking to NW gable from SE, above collar beam
- 44. ditto
- 45. Roof, looking at collar purlin with braces from E
- 46. ditto
- 47. Roof, looking into S end bay from N
- 48. ditto

- 49. The NW gable of the hall seen from inside the 19^{th} -century wing, showing a non-flush facing to the timbers (indicating an internal gable, from the N
- 50. ditto
- 51. SE gable with brickwork removed showing exposed frame from SE
- 52. ditto
- 53. Internal view of roof space in SE bay with brickwork removed from gable from N
- 54. ditto



Plate 3: The kitchen wing (to left) and the NW wing (to right) from N



Plate 4: North end of NW wing with NE wing in background, from NW

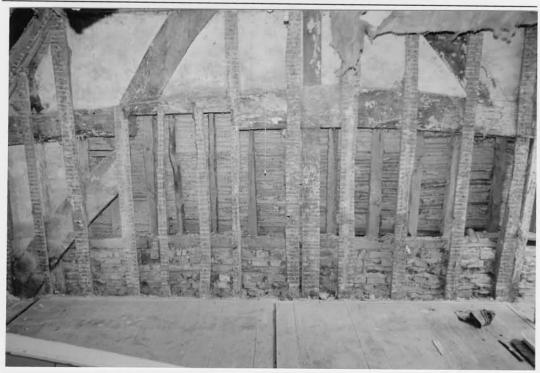


Plate 5: North end of hall on first floor, showing doorway cutting main beam, with closed truss of roof above, from SE



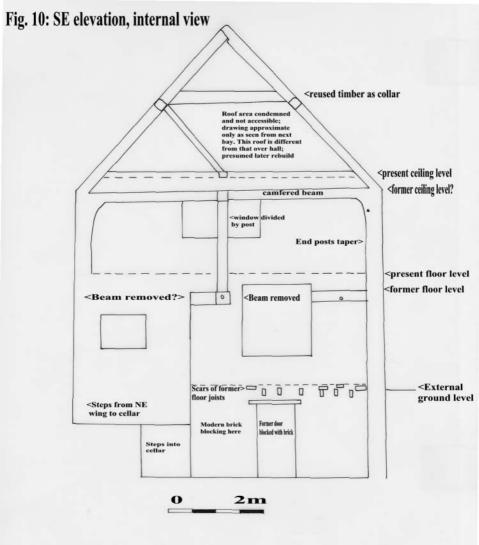
Plate 6: First floor, showing central beam spanning hall, with panelled door with L-shaped hinges inserted, stack behind and to right, from N



Plate 7: Braces in roof at southern end of hall showing closed truss from N



Plate 8: Closed roof truss at north end of hall from inside NW wing, showing sawn off through timbers, from NW



Archive list for historic building recording at Cheverells Farm, Titsey, Surrey

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The archive contains:

- 1. Photographic recording sheets, total two (included in report as pp 13-14)
- 2. Drawing record sheets, total one
- 3. One pack of 54 Black/White photographs with negatives.
- 4. Three plastic sleeves containing 54 colour slides.
- 5. Project brief, 9 sheets.
- 6. Original permatrace drawings, total 4 sheets.
- 7. Report with illustrations, 14 pages text, 4 pages of photos, and 12 figures.
- 8. Project brief, 2 sheets.
- 9. Site notes, 11 sheets
- 10. Architect's drawings, 4 large sheets
- 11. Correspondence and miscellaneous papers concerning site, total 4 sheets.