

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-TOP
ASSESSMENT OF
MUCKNELL FARM
STOULTON
WORCESTERSHIRE

WSM 38291



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WSM 38291
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Mike Napthan 18th October, 2007

1 Summary

An archaeological desk-top assessment was undertaken in October 2007 by Mike Napthan Archaeology to provide information supporting a planning application for the proposed extension of the gardens of Mucknell Farm, and the rebuilding of the present farmhouse in an extended form.

It would appear that there is little evidence to support the contention that there was Roman occupation on the site. There does, however seem some potential for remains or deposits associated with a documented early medieval "berewick" or outlying farmstead at Mucknell, which would confirm the probability that the site has been occupied continuously since before the Norman Conquest .

Due to both historic and recent landscaping of the hill-top site it is very unlikely that buried deposits would be well preserved except under the present farm-house and adjacent "dairy". Much of the core area of the farmstead appears to have been archaeologically sterilised by the levelling of the farmyard in the 1860s and more recent extensive earthmoving during demolition and clearance of the 20th Century farm buildings.

The 19th Century farm buildings have recently been extensively repaired and are to be retained in the current scheme. Only the "dairy" and farmhouse are due to be demolished. The dairy is timber-framed, and appears to have originated in the late 17th Century or early 18th Century. It is in poor structural condition and has been much altered. Cartographic evidence does not show it on its present site in 1838, therefore it is possible that it has been moved, probably as part of the 1860s renewal of the farm buildings.

The farm-house has a far more complex structural history, which has only been assessed by the present project. The earliest elements are the fragmentary remains of a probably late 17th C building, and it is tempting to associate this building with documented heavy expenditure on the farm between 1683 and 1687. Very little of this early, apparently timber-framed, structure survives. The fragments that remain appear to indicate a building with an upper-cruck frame, only one end of which survives in part. The remaining 17th C elements, other than a small area of re-used 17th brickwork, are all doors reused in later contexts.

The majority of the main range of the present farmhouse shell is essentially late 18th Century, but with extensive 19th and 20th Century additions and modifications. The northern side of the house is almost entirely mid 19th century. The house has been extensively altered in recent times, and many of the interior walls moved or replaced in studwork, plasterboard and concrete block-work. Features such as internal doors were retained, but apparently re-set in new contexts.

The conclusion of the present report is that the below ground archaeological resource is not likely to be deeply stratified, even where not truncated. It would appear that the present proposals would only impact directly on an area of circa 200m², and that this area might be covered adequately by a watching brief, with provision for salvage excavation if appropriate within the present farm-house footprint and within the proposed swimming pool.

The farmhouse and "dairy" are due to be demolished, and it is recommended that the buildings be recorded immediately prior to, and during the dismantling process. It has been proposed that all salvageable historic features and materials will be re-used in the present scheme where-ever possible.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 An archaeological documentary assessment was undertaken by Mike Napthan Archaeology. The project is being undertaken on behalf of the landowner Mr Mark Marwood (the Client) and has been arranged through his architects Taylor & Co.
- 2.2 The site location is at NGR SO 906 513 : Fig 1. The site is registered on the Worcester County Historic Environment Record as WSM37461. This DTA is recorded as WSM 38291.
- 2.2 This report represents a summary of the findings of the desk-top assessment. The project was designed to provide a reliable and independent assessment of the historical value of the site, and determine the potential for survival of archaeologically significant remains. A brief for an archaeological evaluation has been prepared by Mike Glyde for WHEAS - this report is intended to broadly meet the "desk-top assessment" requirements of that brief and to clarify the actual nature and potential of the archaeological and architectural resource, prior to further discussion of the mitigation proposals. The project design was prepared in accordance with the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994).

3 Aims

- 3.1 The purpose of an archaeological desk-top evaluation is to gain information about the archaeological resource within a given area or site. These aims were achieved through pursuit of the following objectives:
- i) to define and identify the probable nature of archaeological deposits and historic building fabric on site, and date these where possible;
 - ii) to attempt to determine the likely nature of the archaeological and building sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of structures formerly present on the site;
 - iii) to determine the likely impact of the development on the archaeological resource.

4 Methodology

- 4.1 A documentary search of the County Record Office revealed a small amount of primary evidence directly relating to the present property. There is little historic mapping for the area, and the earliest surviving plan for this part of Stoulton appears to be the 1838 Tithe Apportionment plan (Figs 2 and 3). Trade directories were consulted from copies held "in house" and those held in the Family History Centre. A search of the County Councils HER database revealed no relevant archaeological fieldwork in the immediate area. No significant additional information relating to the farm appears on aerial photographs available in local public collections, but a late 1960s aerial photograph of the farm area is in the possession of the landowner shows the house with its original, porch, garden and 1960s fenestration. The photograph is of interest as it proves the original absence of dormer windows, and shows the "dairy" building as weatherboarded, prior to the insertion of brick infill to the panels on the southern elevation. Also in the possession of the owner are a number of very recent high quality "aerial-mast" oblique photographs showing the farm and its immediate environment. Not surprisingly (in heavy clay soil) no crop-marks are visible other than extensive rutting from recent earth-moving operations.
- 4.2 The site was visited on 4th and 6th October, and a thorough walk-over inspection made of the areas of proposed new garden and the interiors of the farm buildings and farm house. An informal photographic record was made, and the present descriptions were compiled using the

photographs as a reference.

5 Site Development

5.1 Topography

5.1.1 The site (Fig 1) lies on a pronounced outcrop of clay beds of the Lower Lias, here represented by an extremely stiff blueish grey clay. The topsoil is a dark grey brown slightly sandy clay loam with abundant small fragments of decayed Lias. The geology of this area appears to be complex as reddish-brown soils apparently derived from Keuper Marl are present within 500m to the east. The present farm yard currently lies at about 45.95m AOD, and represents an artificially levelled summit of a pronounced knoll. The surrounding fields fall steadily away to a brook at approximately 30m AOD to the north, west and south. The site is approached by a track and road running along the crest of a low ridge from the railway bridge on the A44, some 1200m to the west. Whilst the position is prominent it is overlooked by Upper Wolverton to the east (at 57m AOD) and is slightly lower than the village core along Stoulton Church Lane, 1500m to the south-west. The immediate surroundings are still highly rural, despite the railway line (which is in a cutting) 800m to the south of the house, and a very unsightly industrial development to the west at Woodbury Lane, Norton. The only neighbouring residential property is Hill Farm House, a conversion of two farm cottages formerly part of Mucknell Farm.

5.2 Archaeological background

5.2.1 Very little evidence of Roman and medieval activity has been identified in the immediate area. Despite advice from Malcolm Atkin of WHEAS (letter to Mr Marwood of 2nd October 2007) that "*Roman-British artefacts were found on the site itself in 1996 (WSM25869)*" there appears to be no evidence to support this theory. The quoted HER reference refers to "*A possible Romano-British occupation site based on metal detecting finds and the placename 'Black Ground' on the Tithe Map*". The metal detecting finds referred to are in fact recorded under another WSM number - WSM 34213. The HER record description is as follows "*unstratified finds of Iron Age, Roman, Post Roman, Medieval and post-medieval dates reported under the Treasure Act 1996. Unstratified find of an early medieval annular brooch dating to c 410-625AD. Sent to British Museum. Other unstratified finds in this area are 3 Roman Brooches, an Iron Age Harness fitting and mount, 2 medieval coins and a post medieval seal. The grid references for all 9 finds in this source are limited to 6 figures. They all originate from the area around Upper Wolverton and south of Mucknell Farm*". The grid reference given for this group is SO9157750730. It appears that none of these finds are identifiable as having been found on Mucknell Farm, though it is of course possible that medieval and post medieval items would be found if the area was searched with a metal detector. The "Black Ground" field name (marked on the 1839 Tithe Awards Plan for Norton juxta Kempsey - see Fig 3), refers to a field formerly part of Pitchmoor Farm, to the north of the brook that forms the northern boundary of Mucknell Farm. As Mr Atkins rightly asserts in his letter of 2nd October, "black ground" and similar field names can be indicative of Roman settlement - "Pitchmoor" itself is another example, but all these fields lay outside the Mucknell Farm property and at least 300m from the proposed development area.

5.2.2 Whilst the parishes of Norton juxta Kempsey and Kempsey itself have been comparatively well investigated by recent archaeological fieldwork, little has occurred in Stoulton itself. It is very likely that there was some Roman activity in the parish as it lies in the immediate hinterland of the Roman settlement at Worcester. The soils (being primarily derived from the Lower Lias) are chiefly clay with areas of gravel and sand (VCH 3, 532) - and it is likely that the free-draining alluvial soils were preferred for arable land in the Roman period. Where the fields on the higher ground remained long-term as unimproved pasture it is unlikely that significant quantities of Roman artefacts were distributed by manuring during the Roman period, but Roman material may have been subsequently imported with manure to these areas as they were cultivated in the later medieval and post medieval periods.

5.2.3 The medieval development of the site is little understood - from the paucity of documentary references it would appear that the "berewick" never developed to much more than an outlying farmstead. There certainly appears to be no evidence to support the contention of HER reference WSM 25835 that Mucknell was a manorial site, and the entire record appears to be a misinterpretation of the Domesday entry. It was no doubt with a mind to corroborating the

putative manorial site that the two irregular stock pools at Mucknell were described in WSM25836 as possible fishponds. The HER records have subsequently been updated to reflect considerable doubt as to the validity of this interpretation.

- 5.2.4 The farm still retains some ridge and furrow, particularly to the west of the farmstead. This appears to be of medieval origin; it is to be retained and protected as a wildflower meadow in the proposed scheme.
- 5.2.5 The 1884 First Edition OS mapping appears to show the farm buildings as they would have stood on completion in the 1860s, and all can be recognized today. It is of some significance to note that all mapping up to the mid 20th C shows the field immediately to the east of the farmstead as orchard - this area is therefore likely to have been significantly affected by tree-root damage.

6 Historical Background

- 6.1 The earliest record of the site is as a berewick (outlying farm) held by Urso D'Abitot, Sheriff of Worcester at the time of Domesday. The farm was the pre-Conquest property of the Cathedral of St Mary's Worcester, whose relationship with Urso was one of significant hostility, preserved for posterity by the (probably apocryphal) curse recorded as "highest thou Urse have thou God's curse" (Green 1796, 247). At the time of Domesday Stoulton, Mucknell and Wolverton were all berewicks of the Manor of Kempsey, together containing 7 hides of land. The over-lordship belonged to the Bishops of Worcester until it lapsed in the 15th Century. Urso's interest in the property descended with the rest of his possessions to the Beauchamps of Elmley. In the 15th Century Stoulton (including Mucknell) was incorporated with the Manor of Wadborough, and the Manor was known as Stoulton with Wadborough into the late 18th Century. Mucknell appears to have been a fairly unimportant property within the manor as it was rarely mentioned separately (VCH 3, 533-4).
- 6.2 It appears that the surrounding property was heathland - a complaint brought against the last Abbot of Pershore in 1533 by the tenants of Stoulton was that he had driven their cattle from the heaths of Wolverton, Wadborough, Mucknell and Over Wolverton (VCH 3, 533). In 1625 the Manor of Stoulton was sold to Samuel Sandys of Ombersley. Due to his involvement in the Civil War Sandys mortgaged the property to the Somers family of Worcester, who subsequently acquired the freehold before 1716. It was bequeathed in that year by John Somers to his two sisters, one of which Mary Cocks eventually inherited the whole (VCH 3, pp533-4). It was in the hands of her grandson Sir Charles Cocks by 1781, at which time the estate covered about two thirds of the parish and was worth about £1050 per annum (Nash 1781, Vol I, pp24-5).
- 6.3 The earliest document (WRO BA 544 ref 899:35) relating directly to the present property discovered during the present research was a valuation of 1683-7, which identifies the then farmer as George Brewer, with a "one life" copyhold lease on 70 acres, 1 rod and 15 perches at Mucknall [sic]. He also held an additional 63 acres and 27 perches "own" land as a copyholder - the tenure in the latter case being for two lives. He paid a total rent of £2-16-11d. The property had apparently increased in value by £ 51-13- 4d between 1683 ("present book") and 1687, which is by far the most dramatic increase in value of all the Stoulton properties over this period. It seems extremely probable that the substantial increase reflects major improvements to the buildings, and probably the initial construction of the farm-house.
- 6.4 Little can be determined about the 18th Century occupants of the farm - presumably for the first half of the century at least they were the descendants of George Brewer. Trades directory evidence is, as usual, sparse for the early years of the 19th Century. The earliest identified 19th Century tenant was Thomas Ross, who held the property in 1838 (Stoulton Tithe Apportionment WRO BA1572 - see Figure 4). In 1860 the farm at "Muckenhill" was occupied by George Quarrell (Kellys Directory) but by 1863 it had been taken over by Thomas Quarrell (Post Office Directory). It was almost certainly Thomas who had the present farm building range built, as the buildings incorporate bricks inscribed (prior to firing) with the dates 1863 and 1865. Thomas apparently did not get much time to use the buildings as by 1868 Mrs Thomas Quarrell, presumably his widow, was listed as the farmer. The next tenant was one Mr Haywood in 1873, succeeded by 1879 by Herbert Tovey, who remained until at least 1896. The farm was occupied by the Smithin family from August 1898 to 1917 at which time the farm was held by the representatives of the late Frank Smithin, who had succeeded from his

father Henry. In 1917 the whole of the Stoulton Estate was sold by Lord Sandys, and at that time Mucknell Farm comprised 198 acres 1 rod 39 perches, showing an increase of about 65 acres since 1687.

- 6.5 The 1917 Sale description (WRO BA5240/6 ref b.705:358) is worth quoting at length, as it is the earliest detailed description of the farm located to date:

MUCKENHILL FARM, WHITTINGTON, comprising 198a1r39p or thereabouts of pasture and arable land excellent farmhouse and capital modern buildings and cottages thereon. Rental £107 15s 0d per annum.

The farmhouse is conveniently situate in the centre of the farm, and contains Entrance Porch and Lobby; Dining Room with tiled grate; Sitting room with tiled grate and two cupboards; kitchen with range and two cupboards; China pantry; lobby with side entrance; Larder; Dairy; Back Kitchen with American Range, two furnaces, sink and soft water pump; front and back staircases; six bedrooms; servants' room and two store rooms; courtyard with Coal Place; Pump and well of water, and pleasant front and kitchen gardens.

The buildings are of modern erection and conveniently arranged, and comprise two-stall Nag stable; Coach House; Saddle Room; two loose boxes; enclosed shed for eight cows; root house; poultry house; double bay barn with centre driving way and chaff cutting stage; cart stable for eight horses; open shed; calving shed; and pig shed, enclosing 4 styes; boiler house with furnace; poultry house; cart house and large Granary.

The rickyard contains six bay Dutch Barn with iron pillars and corrugated iron roof and a timber and iron roof implement shed.

- 6.6 The sales particulars include a plan which shows both the extent of the buildings in 1917 and the names of all the fields: the latter appear to be little changed from 1838 (Figs 3 and 4). Sales particulars for a further sale of the farm in 1938 are listed in the accessions of the WRO, (under BA 5240/5 ref 705:358) but were missing at the time of enquiry (Oct 2007).

7 Rapid building survey

A rapid visual assessment of the standing buildings and structures was made on 4th and 6th October 2007. A large number of photographs (approx 300) were taken, and are retained in the project archive as an informal record. Selected images are presented on Figs 5 and 6. Phased block plans are presented as Figs 8 and 9.

7.1 1860s Farm buildings

- 7.1.1 The farm buildings have almost all been recently thoroughly restored, with later accretions removed and the brickwork and roofs thoroughly repaired (and where necessary replaced) to a very high standard in appropriate materials, mainly salvaged from the site itself. The main farm building ranges may be very confidently dated to between 1863 and 1865 from inscribed bricks found by the present owner during the restoration. The bricks, which were inscribed prior to firing include several with names inscribed, but due to the cursive script used none can be read with certainty except the dates. The inscribed bricks were preserved during the restoration works, and those now on the western end of the yard were re-set to make them more visible. The 1863 dated brick at the eastern end of the yard remains in its original location. The fabric and design of all the buildings is extremely similar, and it is almost certain that all are contemporary.

- 7.1.2 The present structural condition of all of the brick built farm buildings is excellent, but all original joinery, contents and fittings (with the exception of the principal roof trusses) have been removed. Photographs taken prior to the renovation show that much of the joinery (such as the barn doors) was in fact secondary work dating to the 20th C.

- 7.1.3 During the renovation of the farm buildings a small number of secondary openings were infilled or altered to match the surrounding brickwork - these are marked on annotated 1:50 survey drawings originally produced by Midland Survey Ltd in February 2005.

7.1.4 "Dairy" building

The only element of the farm buildings which appears to pre-date 1863 is the former "dairy" building (latterly apparently a farm office) adjoining the farm-house (Fig 5). This building is

much altered but appears to have originated as a late 17th C or early 18th C timber framed farm building of unknown function. The building has been drastically altered in a number of phases, and it is not even certain that it is in its original location, as it does not appear here on the 1838 Tithe Awards plan. It has been mentioned (para 4.1) that the building was horizontally weather-boarded on the southern elevation at least until the 1960s. The frame is most complete on its eastern side, where it has been largely protected from the weather by the adjoining 1860s range. The northern gable end has no framing surviving below the wall-plate, other than a probably secondary (and truncated) corner post at the north-eastern corner. Effectively this elevation therefore consists only of a roof truss, and this is suggestive that the building has in fact been shortened to its present length. The western side of the building abutts the farmhouse. There appears to be a secondary "truss" arrangement above wall-plate level consisting of re-used timbers. The whole of this side roof adjoining the main building appears to be secondary, as the remnants of the principal rafter beneath it bear a trench for a removed purlin, showing that the building originally had a simple twin pitched roof. The secondary roof appears to be of 19th or early 20th C date. Below the wall plate level there are some indications of studwork or framing at first floor level, but only in the area where the "dairy" building abutts the first floor landing. This area is presently clad both sides in plasterboard, and further stripping would be needed to clarify if there is any original framing at this level. There does not appear to be any visible sign of framing at ground floor level on this side. The bridging beams (which are secondary or tertiary) appear to be supported by the brickwork of the house gable end. The south-facing elevation is relatively complete, but the timbers are in very poor condition, and several appear to be secondary as they are fixed with nails rather than pegs. The appearance of this elevation is not improved by a relatively recent sliding patio door and softwood casement at first floor level. All of the external brick infill of the timber framed panels appears to be of circa 1970s-80s, re-using 19th C brick. Where the "dairy" building adjoins the brick range to the east the brick infill is of apparently unaltered 19th C brickwork.

- 7.1.5 The lower part of the timber frame is missing on all elevations, having evidently rotted to well above the original ground plate level. From the exterior it is clear that the frame is now supported by late 20th C red engineering brick dwarf walls, sitting on a cast concrete floor slab approximately 280mm deep. The roof is of reclaimed hand made and machine made tiles - the present roof probably dates to the 1980s, but retains re-used rafters.
- 7.1.6 There are no surviving original internal features within the building. The first floor structure appears to have been inserted in its entirety (including the bridging beams) during the mid 19th C, and there have been a number of 20th C modifications, including the provision of a shower-room and all new fenestration. The studwork partition wall at first floor level appears to be also of 19th date, though it incorporates a disparate group of re-used timbers. The "tie beam" in this partition appears to have late 17th C origins, but seems to have been trimmed down for its present role. The attribution of this building as a "dairy" (and possibly "larder"?) is only derived from the 1917 Sales particulars, and this may well not have been the original function. Dairies and butteries were however often sited adjacent to the farm-house for the convenience of the kitchen staff. At present there is no internal link between this building and the farm-house, but its former existence at ground floor level must be suspected. The earlier removal of the gable end wall brickwork of the farmhouse at this level is likely to have removed all evidence of any former link.
- 7.1.7 It is extremely difficult to firmly date the timber framed building in its present condition - no significant or precisely datable elements appear to remain, and its overall form is clearly much altered. The two "gable ends" do not match in terms of framing, and one indeed may originally have been an internal truss. The size of the framed panels is suggestive of a very late 17th or early 18th C date, as is the apparent use of elm for the principal tie beam. The eastern elevation is comparatively well framed, and so is the truss on the northern elevation, but the southern frame has the appearance of being cobbled together (or much repaired?) by inexpert hands. The building is clearly of composite construction, and given its possible absence from this location in 1838 it is not improbable that it was moved to its present location during the 1860s re-modelling of the farm-yard. The key evidence will lie in its precise relationship with the 18th C elements of the farmhouse, but unfortunately 19th C and 20th C alterations currently obscure any surviving clues.
- 7.1.8 The present condition of the building is poor, and there is some evidence that the recent brickwork infilling is contributing to the decay of the timber framework as the cement used does not expand and contract with the timber, exacerbating water penetration around the panels. Other than the remnants of the timber frame no other original fabric appears to survive.

Whilst it might prove possible to salvage a small percentage of the frame for re-use over 50% of the original frame appears to have been removed by alterations over the years, and perhaps 70% of the remaining external structural timbers would need replacement if the building were to be restored to modern Building Regulations.

7.1.9 The building does not appear to meet the English Heritage Listing Criteria (see Appendix 1), and does not fit into any of the categories for designation listed in the English Heritage Agricultural Buildings Selection Guide (March 2007) as it is not “reasonably intact”, does not “contain sufficient evidence to illustrate...original form” and is not “relate to an outstanding group of structures”. Neither is it of any architectural quality, it has no direct documentation, there is no known historical importance or association, and it is not an example of regional diversity. In these circumstances it would appear to be unprotectable by current legislation.

7.1.10 The present land-owner has indicated that he wishes to utilise all of the salvageable material (tiles, bricks, beams etc) within the present restoration scheme at Mucknell Farm, and this will at least ensure the long term survival of the more significant elements of the present building. It is recommended that a detailed drawn record is made of the original framing prior to dismantling, and the remainder of the building recorded photographically.

7.2 *The Farmhouse*

7.2.1 The present farmhouse appears from the exterior to be late 18th C from the south, and mid 19th C from the north. The fenestration is all very modern (Fig 5). This appearance is largely borne out by an internal inspection, but as always the actual development sequence is rather more complex.

7.2.2 The earliest surviving elements are the two opposed blades of a probable “upper cruck”, or possibly “eaves blades” between the second and third bays at the western end of the house (Fig 6). Both blades are badly damaged due to later openings having been cut through them. The blades are now incorporated in an internal wall of largely modern construction (of concrete block at ground-floor level), and truncated at attic level by tie beam of the late 18th C roof truss. There are no immediately apparent datable characteristics in the present crucks. Recent research in Shropshire has suggested that the majority of surviving “true” cruck frames date from the 15th and 16th Centuries, and similar dates have been identified in several other counties (Mercer, 2003 p131). Upper crucks have been considered a later development of the “true cruck”, as they provide substantially greater headroom, and several examples are known from the 17th Century in Herefordshire (RCHME). There is no evidence that crucks pre-date box-framing, but it remained in use for a long time, as late as the eighteenth century on the North York Moors (English Heritage Vernacular Houses Selection Guide (Domestic Buildings 1) March 2007). A particularly late local example of “upper cruck” construction of 19th C date has been identified at 21 Friar Street, Worcester by Richard Crook in advance of alterations to this listed 17th century building (WCM 100724). The blades here cannot be precisely dated without detailed examination, but are probably of late 17th or early 18th C date. The survival of the blades appears to have occurred by chance, as they appear to now serve little useful structural function. They possibly marked the western end of the original building. There are some remnants of framing below the crucks surviving at first floor level only, and this may be possibly be contemporary with the crucks. The crucks have been treated as a decorative feature in a 1980s renovation scheme, and prior to detailed examination caution is required in interpretation as some of the timbers may be decorative recent additions.

7.2.3 The second major element of historic carpentry within the building is the ceiling timbers of the large former “back kitchen” in the third bay on the southern side. The bridging beam and first floor floor-joists are both of late 17th C character, with discrete simple chamfers to the joists indicating that they were intended to be visible. The bridging beam itself is somewhat crudely chamfered with irregular chamfer stops (that are inconsistent from end to end - Fig 6). The beam has been hacked for plastering, and it is possible that the chamfering is secondary. All patination and surface finishes have been removed by sand-blasting in common with almost all of the exposed structural timbers and joinery in the house. The joists are located in the bridging beam with barefaced soffitt tenons, which appear not to have been pegged, as all of the tenons have pulled out to some extent - many to 40-50mm, leaving very little structural strength. Barefaced soffitt tenons are a fairly primitive joint, characteristic of 14th Century floors (Brown 1982 p186) but found in poorer quality carpentry of much later date as it is a very simple joint to execute. The apparent absence of pegging is curious, and it is possible that the floor was dismantled when the farmhouse facade was rebuilt in the late 18th C and/or when the chimney was rebuilt in the mid 19th C, and the pegs not replaced on re-construction. Peg-

- holes are presently obscured, so it cannot be determined if they actually exist. If they do not, there is a distinct possibility that the floor is 18th C, following traditional forms.
- 7.2.4 The internal wall between the 3rd and 4th bays ("back kitchen" and side lobby) is partially aligned at an angle to the main orientation of the building, and appears to comprise of late 17th-early 18th C brick where the brickwork is exposed beneath the back stairs. The internal wall is not bonded to the exterior brickwork (which is apparently of later 18th C date), and it is possible that the ground floor elements of this wall are a relic of an earlier building. [The wall's relationship with the original door to the farmyard is curious, and suggests that the wall was a secondary partition in the earlier building (if the door has not been re-located, which is possible).
- 7.2.5 The remaining surviving "pre 18th C" elements within the building consist of re-used plank doors of late 17th C date. Not surprisingly these re-used doors are now all located in less prestigious areas of the building, including two cut down examples in the attic. They are hung on possibly late 17th or early 18th C hinges and retain simple door furniture (such as a simple chain handle) which might also be late 17th C. The sole example of a plank built late 17th C door on the first floor is a recent insertion in a plasterboard and stud wall, and separates the back-stairs landing from the first floor passage. The door is in a later surround and has been reversed. It is possible that it originates from within the farm buildings, but equally may have been acquired from elsewhere.
- 7.2.6 At ground floor level the only probably pre 19th C door is that which was formerly the door to the farmyard (Fig 6). It is now an internal door between the side lobby and the "lean-to" kitchen, but is clearly an external door which has suffered decay at the base (neatly repaired), and internally has a swivelling security door bar locked (when in place) by a gudgeon pin. The door and its contemporary frame have few closely dateable characteristics, but are (on the evidence of the door-bar and hinges) probably 18th Century. Interestingly the drop handle of the 19th C exterior door to the "lean-to" kitchen also may possibly be of mid-late 17th C date (vide Hall, 2005 figure 2.78 for similar examples), and if so is certainly re-used in its current location.
- 7.2.7 The farmhouse was clearly almost entirely rebuilt in the late 18th C as the southern façade, original northern façade, and western gable end are all in brick of this date. It is probable that the extension of the main range to the west (the present bays 1 and 2) occurred at the same time as the addition of the new roof and attic floor, though there are slight variations in the style of the carpentry which may indicate a more complex sequence. The roof structure consists of neatly made through purlin queen-strut roof in probably elm, pegged and with visible assembly marks. Such roof forms were popular from the 17th C through to the early 19th Century. The common rafters appear to be all modern graded softwood. It is notable that the four roof bay divisions are unequal lengths, and this again may be indicative that the 18th C rebuilding was of more than one phase.
- 7.2.8 It is probable that the present flag-stone floor in the back kitchen and side lobby are 18th C in origin, but it appears to have been relaid at least in parts, possibly over a DPM.
- 7.2.9 The "new" western end bay (Bay 1) was cellared, access being through cellar stairs in the second bay. The cellar itself is of mid-late 18th C brick, with a deeply channelled brick floor, clearly susceptible to flooding as it is obscured by silt. There are now no cellar vents in this cellar, and access for goods was latterly through the later cellar to the north. The cellar steps are probably replacements of the 19th Century, and lead up to Bay 2. The short length of this latter bay, suggests strongly that it was the location of the 18th C stairwell. None of the original stairs survive and the present main stair arrangement is very recent.
- 7.2.10 The 18th Century eastern gable end wall has been largely removed at ground level; the scar of the former brick wall line is visible on the chimney in the north-eastern corner of the side lobby. The removal of this wall left two bridging beams unsupported at their eastern ends, and they are now propped with substantial modern posts. The reason for this presumably recent alteration is unclear, as is the method by which the upper half of the gable end is now supported. Further investigation is needed to clarify the matter.
- 7.2.11 The next major phase of fabric is of mid 19th C date, and this represents the vast majority of the surviving visible internal features. The building was effectively extended to a double pile by building to the north of the original range (Fig 6). It is probable that the north-western wing was added first, as the brick appears to be circa 1840-50. The cellar was also doubled in size at this stage. Most of the surviving cast iron fire surrounds are of this date, and it is very probable that the two end chimneys were added (or rebuilt?) during this period. The addition of the "lean-to" kitchen appears to have occurred before 1870 on the basis of the brickwork, and it is

most probably of 1850s-60s date. The surviving original internal joinery (built in cupboards and doors) appears to be of this date range throughout the house, and it is probable that the floors, door-cases architraves and skirtings were almost all replaced during this period, though the vast majority have been subsequently replaced (probably in the 1980s or 1990s) with modern timber.

- 7.2.12 The massive central chimney is built entirely of mid 19th C brick, which has been exposed at both ground-floor and 1st floor levels by sandblasting. The triple shafted chimney stacks are a simplified "tudor" style with diagonally placed square shafts. This was evidently built for show rather than practical reasons as the chimney actually corbels out and expands at wall-plate level (Fig 6). None of the original fire surrounds (or ranges) survive in the central chimney, and it has been modified substantially to accept a modern woodburner (now removed) in place of the range documented in the 1917 sale particulars. The chimney in the "lean to" kitchen has the relic brickwork of the "two furnaces" described in the same particulars, one of which clearly heated a washing copper (now removed).
- 7.2.13 The 19th C alterations to the house have largely been obscured or removed by the drastic late 20th C "renovation". The scope of the 1980s or 1990s renovation included the total renewal of almost all of the suspended timber floors with new pine boarding, the replacement (and rearrangement?) of most of the internal walls on the upper floors, with new stud and plasterboard walls, replacement of all skirtings and architraves, renewal of some ground floor walls with concrete block-work, exposure of floor beams and joists by removal of almost all original lath and plaster ceilings. Some of the rooms had floor joists completely replaced in softwood, in other cases the dating of the joists cannot be presently determined. Only in the first floor Bay 1 bedroom was the original wide planked floor retained. The building was re-roofed (reusing original tiles) with softwood rafters, and the dormer windows were probably also added at this stage. All of the original interior joinery retained was stripped by sandblasting (and suffered severe surface erosion as a result), and most of the stripped doors rehung in new or reclaimed frames. The exposure of the suspended floor joists by removal of the original lath and plaster ceilings was no doubt intended to give an "*olde worlde*" farmhouse feel, but was historically inaccurate as the 18th C timber joists are plain and were never intended to be seen. Subsequently all of the windows have been recently replaced by totally unsuitable plastic double glazing. Only one pair of 19th C internal shutters remains (at ground floor level on the north elevation of the western "wing").
- 7.2.14 The building does not appear, on the basis of the present thorough inspection (which was not however a full survey), to meet the English Heritage Listing Criteria (see Appendix 1), and does not fit into any of the categories for designation listed in the English Heritage Agricultural Buildings Selection Guide (Mar 2007) as it is not "reasonably intact" as built, does not "contain sufficient evidence to illustrate original form" and is not "relate to an outstanding group of structures". Neither is it of particular architectural quality, it has no direct documentation, there is no known historical importance or association, and it is not an example of regional diversity. In these circumstances it appears to be unprotectable by current legislation. It is strongly recommended that the building be archaeologically recorded prior to and during the dismantling process. At a minimum there should be a full photographic survey, with drawings of all significant features, together with annotated copies of the Midland Survey Ltd Feb 2005 "as existing" drawings. Cross sections along the length and across the width of the building would also be desirable.

8 Conclusions and Impact Assessment

- 8.1 There is some potential for buried archaeologically significant remains to survive in discrete areas of the site - almost entirely restricted to the areas beneath the present farm-house (where not cellared) and those areas on the periphery of the property not affected by recent earthmoving (see Fig 7). There appears to be no proven evidence of Roman activity in the immediate area, but evidence of later activity and occupation may be anticipated in areas not affected by the 1860s creation of the farmyard and modern earthmoving operations. There is not expected to be any significant depth of surviving stratigraphy in any of the areas affected by the development/landscaping proposals, but isolated cut features may survive particularly beneath the existing buildings. The deposits anticipated to be present would relate principally to the medieval and post-medieval farmstead. It is recommended that the archaeological resource be protected by archaeological monitoring of all deep excavation (below 0.5m) in areas with possible archaeological survival (ie not previously truncated; see Fig 7), and by a

- watching brief (with provision for salvage recording) on the removal of the present farmhouse and adjacent "dairy" building which may be considered an area of archaeological potential. The landscaping planned is generally very shallow or involves replacement of topsoil to re-instate original levels, and is therefore very unlikely to have any archaeological impact. Where deeper excavation such as the planned new swimming pool or new farmhouse building does prove to have an impact on any surviving archaeologically significant deposits it is anticipated that they may be preserved by record. In the case of the swimming pool it will be possible to consider re-location if this proves to be in an area of exceptional archaeological significance.
- 8.2 The standing brick farm building range are now in an excellent condition due to a lengthy restoration by the present owner - they are not threatened by the present development proposals which consist primarily of a change of use without significant alterations to the extant fabric. Re-use will ensure their long-term survival. An accurate 1:50 survey of 2005 exists and may be amended to show subsequent alterations. A photographic record prior to completion of the refurbishment is recommended.
- 8.3 The timber-framed former "dairy"/farm office building is presently in poor condition, and has been drastically altered since original construction, possibly also moved. It is not adaptable to re-use without very extensive replacement of the surviving decayed timbers, and the past loss of perhaps 50% of the original framing elements has left it as an uninterpretable fragment. It appears to fall outside the criteria for selection as a designated agricultural or vernacular building (English Heritage Selection Guides, March 2007), and therefore is not protected by current legislation. It is recommended that following recording it is carefully dismantled and elements of the frame re-utilised where possible in the restoration of the remaining farm buildings and replacement farmhouse. The present brickwork infill is mainly laid in recent Portland cement, and it is unlikely that much can be salvaged economically except from the eastern elevation which has not suffered so drastically from 20th C cement repairs.
- 8.4 The farmhouse, although of some local interest, does not appear to contain any features that would merit its preservation as a whole. It appears to fall outside the criteria for selection as a designated agricultural or vernacular building (English Heritage Selection Guides, March 2007), and therefore is not protected by current legislation. The features within the building that may be considered of historical or architectural interest are catalogued below (Appendix 2) and it is recommended that where-ever possible these are carefully removed as the building is dismantled, stored securely under-cover, and re-used in the adaption of the farm building, and as architectural or decorative features in the new house. The building as a whole should be recorded prior to and during dismantling as indicated above.
- 8.5 Overall the proposed development would seem to be largely beneficial, and at least non-damaging to the buried archaeological resource. Cultivation of the fields for agricultural purpose will cease, and the establishment of wildflower meadows will ensure the long term preservation of the relic ridge and furrow field system, and any buried earlier remains in these areas.
- 8.6 The potential loss of historic building fabric is always regrettable, but in the present case the proposals for mitigation include the careful dismantling of the present farm-house and adjacent timber framed "dairy" building, and the salvaging for re-use of as much of the original building fabric as possible. In addition the 19th C features, such as fire-surrounds and doors will also be retained on site for reuse in the refurbishment and rebuilding process. In the case of many of the features it appears that they are in their second stage of re-use already, having been moved and altered during the late 20th C and earlier "renovations" which destroyed their original contexts. The concept of the new house has, from its inception, been designed to be eco-friendly, and this includes re-use of the existing materials where possible as a key element to provide (in the terms of the architect's brief) "a modern house with a traditional feel". The process of recording the building during dismantling is perhaps the most effective way of compiling a full and complete building record, and is to be preferred to simple recording in advance of stripping out as the fabric of the structure will be progressively fully exposed and it should be possible to obtain samples of the materials for further analysis.

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Appendix 1: English Heritage Listing Criteria

The main criteria used are:

Architectural interest: all buildings which are nationally important for the interest of their architectural design, decoration and craftsmanship; also important examples of particular building types and techniques, and significant plan forms

Historic interest: this includes buildings which illustrate important aspects of the nation's social, economic, cultural or military history

Close historical association with nationally important buildings or events

Group value, especially where buildings comprise an important architectural or historic unity or are a fine example of planning (such as squares, terraces and model villages)

Appendix 2: Features of architectural or historical interest**Farmhouse****Cellars:**

No features of interest noted

Ground floor:Bay 1:

*Doors from Bay 2 are mid 19th Century four panel softwood doors, both with planted bolelection mouldings to panels. Door furniture appears slightly later (1870s-80s). Both damaged by sand blasting, but re-usable if sanded thoroughly. In common with the subsequently listed 19th C panelled doors these are mass-produced items and far from rare - they do however have some historical value **Recommendation: Retain for possible reuse on site.***

*Black and red speckled "marble" (probably painted slate) chimney piece of circa 1850-1860s. Fine carved corbels. Has been re-set in its present position, and the hearth-back and brick base appears to be relatively recent. Possibly not original to the house. **Recommendation: Retain for possible reuse on site.***

*Ceiling beams - Simple squared ?elm bridging beam and floor joists, not originally visible and formerly disguised by lath and plaster. Now sand-blasted and varnished. **Recommendation: Retain for possible reuse on site.***

Bay 2: (Lobby to front door and lobby to cellar stairs)

*Door to cellar is plain mid 19th Century four panel softwood door with 1850s-60s wooden boxlock with decorative stamped metal plates, key present. **Recommendation: Retain for possible reuse on site.***

*Door to west wing is four panel late 19th C softwood door, upper two panels glazed, only partially sand-blasted (perhaps from fear of damaging the glass?!). Door furniture includes 1870s-1880s metal lock-case and later bolt **Recommendation: Retain for possible reuse on site.***

*Floor: Stone flags - **Recommendation: Retain for reuse on site.***

Nb: former front door and frame are missing.

Bay 3:

*Door from Bay 2 is plain mid-late 19th Century four panel softwood door. Door furniture appears slightly later (1870s-80s). Damaged by sand blasting, but re-usable if sanded thoroughly. Nb door from front door lobby to Bay 3 is missing. Door to china pantry is plain mid 19th Century four panel softwood door with 1850s-60s wooden boxlock with decorative stamped metal plates Manufactured by H.Symmonds & Co Birmingham. **Recommendation: Retain for possible reuse on site.***

*Corner cupboard (built into chimney corner): plain pine panelled doors and surround of 1850s-1870s date **Recommendation: Retain for possible reuse on site.***

*Ceiling beams - large scantling squared elm bridging beam, with crude chamfer and rough plain chamfer-stops. Possibly late 17th C, but also possibly early-mid 18th C. Floor joists with simple stopped chamfers, originally intended to be visible but subsequently disguised by lath and plaster(now removed). Has been sand-blasted. **Recommendation: Retain for reuse, if possible preferably within new house.***

Floor: Stone flags (partially pointed in Portland cement and possibly re-laid in recent times) -

Recommendation: Retain for reuse on site.Bay 4: (side lobby)

Door from Bay 2 is plain mid-late 19th Century four panel softwood door with small metal lock-case of 1870s-1890s date. **Recommendation: Retain for possible reuse on site.**

Door to "lean to" kitchen - a relatively rare example of a plain ledged external plank door of probable mid 18th Century date, together with contemporary frame and door furniture, including a thumb-latch, swivelling iron door-bar, staple and gudgeon pin. Possibly the most interesting feature in the house. **Recommendation: Retain for reuse, preferably within new house.**

Ceiling beams - plain squared bridging beams in ?elm, and plain squared ceiling joists, probably also elm. No substantial evidence of former lath and plaster, so possibly originally exposed joists. Bridging beams now supported at eastern end by modern posts, but formerly ?lap jointed onto removed spreader plate (now removed). Curious arrangement. Timbers undiagnostic but probably 18th-early 19th C. **Recommendation: Retain for possible reuse.**

Timber fireplace lintel - probably cut down and re-used for its current position in an early 19th C chimney-breast - **Recommendation: probably not re-useable, other than as part of decorative scheme- retention at discretion of owner**

Floor: Stone flags - **Recommendation: Retain for reuse on site.**

"Lean-to" Kitchen

Door from farm-yard is of late 19th C framed ledged and braced construction - of no great intrinsic interest other than for its ironwork. The massive strap and pin hinges were probably made expressly for this door, and are an interesting piece of craft iron-work. The drop-handle latch lifter, with heart-shaped back plate is possibly a re-used late 17th C door fitting, but closer examination would be needed to confirm (some handmade facsimiles have been made in the 19th C and recent times). **Recommendation: retain all of the drop-handle latch lifter, latch and latch keep elements, together with hinges for re-use on site**

Floor: (Mostly) Stone flags - **Recommendation: Retain for reuse on site.**

Door to west wing - plain ledged plank door, probably late 19th C. **Recommendation: Retain for possible reuse on site.**

West wing ("Sitting room")

Pair of full height pine built in chimney corner cupboards with raised and fielded panelled doors. Original architraves to cupboard fascias. Probably circa 1860-70 **Recommendation: Retain for reuse on site.**

Pair of folding pine window shutters, with all of original iron-mongery, unfortunately sand blasted, but re-useable. Surround is recent. **Recommendation: re use if possible on site**

First Floor:Bay 1:

Door from Bay 2 is mid-late 19th Century four panel softwood door, with planted bolection mouldings to panels. Door furniture is metal lock case of 1870s-80s. Damaged by sand blasting, but re-usable if sanded thoroughly. **Recommendation: Retain for possible reuse on site.**

Fine small cast iron hob-grate of 1840s-1850s date, with contemporary simple pine chimney-piece. **Recommendation: Retain for possible reuse on site.**

Full height pine built in chimney corner cupboard/wardrobe, planted bolection moulding to panels and original architraves - circa 1860s-1870s **Recommendation: Retain for reuse on site.**

Ceiling beams - Simple squared ?elm bridging beam and floor joists, not originally visible and formerly disguised by lath and plaster. Now sand-blasted and varnished. **Recommendation: Retain for possible reuse on site.**

Floor - wide ?oak boards, possibly re-used in this context. Apparently the only original floor planking remaining in the building. Probably 18th C. **Recommendation: Retain for reuse on site.**

Bay 2:

Relict fragmentary timber framing in wall between Bays 2 and 3 (visible both sides); includes fragmentary cruck blades, probably of an upper cruck design, but considerable further examination would be required to confirm this and the presently postulated dating of the late 17th Century. Significant. The possibility of specialist dating (dendrochronology) should be investigated, but it is not presently possible to identify an area of sufficient radial depth on the blades without extensive further exposure work. The blades appear to have been cut from a

tree that has been quartered rather than simply halved lengthways. **Recommendation: Retain for re-use as a decorative internal feature on site if possible**

Ceiling beams - Simple squared ?elm bridging beam and floor joists, not originally visible and formerly disguised by lath and plaster. Now sand-blasted and varnished. **Recommendation: Retain for possible reuse on site.**

Bay 3

Ceiling beams - Simple squared ?elm bridging beam and floor joists, not originally visible and formerly disguised by lath and plaster. Now sand-blasted and varnished. **Recommendation: Retain for possible reuse on site.**

Wall cupboard door in passage (RH side of central chimney), of mid-late 19th C date beaded plank construction, with ?early 19th C hinges but surround appears modified. **Recommendation: Retain at discretion of owner**

Bay 4

Door to first floor passage from back-stairs is of five-plank construction, with moulding to the outer and central planks. Of mid-late 17th C date, but certainly not in its original position. Has been reversed and stripped of original ironmongery. A relatively rare survival, and significant, even if its origins are unknown. Present ironmongery is modern cast pastiche. **Recommendations: Retain for re-use; if reuse in present scheme not possible offer to a museum or architectural salvage yard.**

West wing

Fine small cast iron hob-grate of 1840s-1850s date, with contemporary simple pine chimney-piece. **Recommendation: Retain for possible reuse on site.**

Attic floor:

Bay 1

This bay (in common with the remaining bays) has a fine 18th C ?elm truss with substantial purlins. These three trusses represent a moderately good quality 18th C roof, the common rafters of which appear to have been replaced (where currently accessible). The trusses and purlins have the potential for re-use, but this would have to be in a building of the same width. It is very unlikely that they could be re-used in the current scheme, and certainly not in a habitable attic as the headroom of the central doorways is much too low. **Recommendation: the trusses and purlins should be considered for re-use on this site, but if this is not practicable they should be offered to an architectural salvage yard for re-use elsewhere.**

Bay 2

There is a crude plank built, and probably cut-down late 17th C three-plank ?elm door between bays 2 and 3. It is hung on 18th C hinges, and has a possibly mid 18th C box lock. The door pull is a short length of handmade chain fixed to a staple. The whole is primitive but functional in closing the very low door-way between bays. **Recommendation: retain, complete with all fittings for potential use as cupboard door or decorative feature (too small for re-use in a doorway)**

Bay 3

A similar door to that in Bay 2, but apparently not a cut down door (the ledges all match), and with a wooden latch and latch keep instead of the box-lock **Recommendation: retain, complete with all fittings for potential use as cupboard door or decorative feature (too small for re-use in a doorway).**

Brickwork /tiles (general).

It is recommended that facing bricks and tiles are retained where possible for re-use on site.

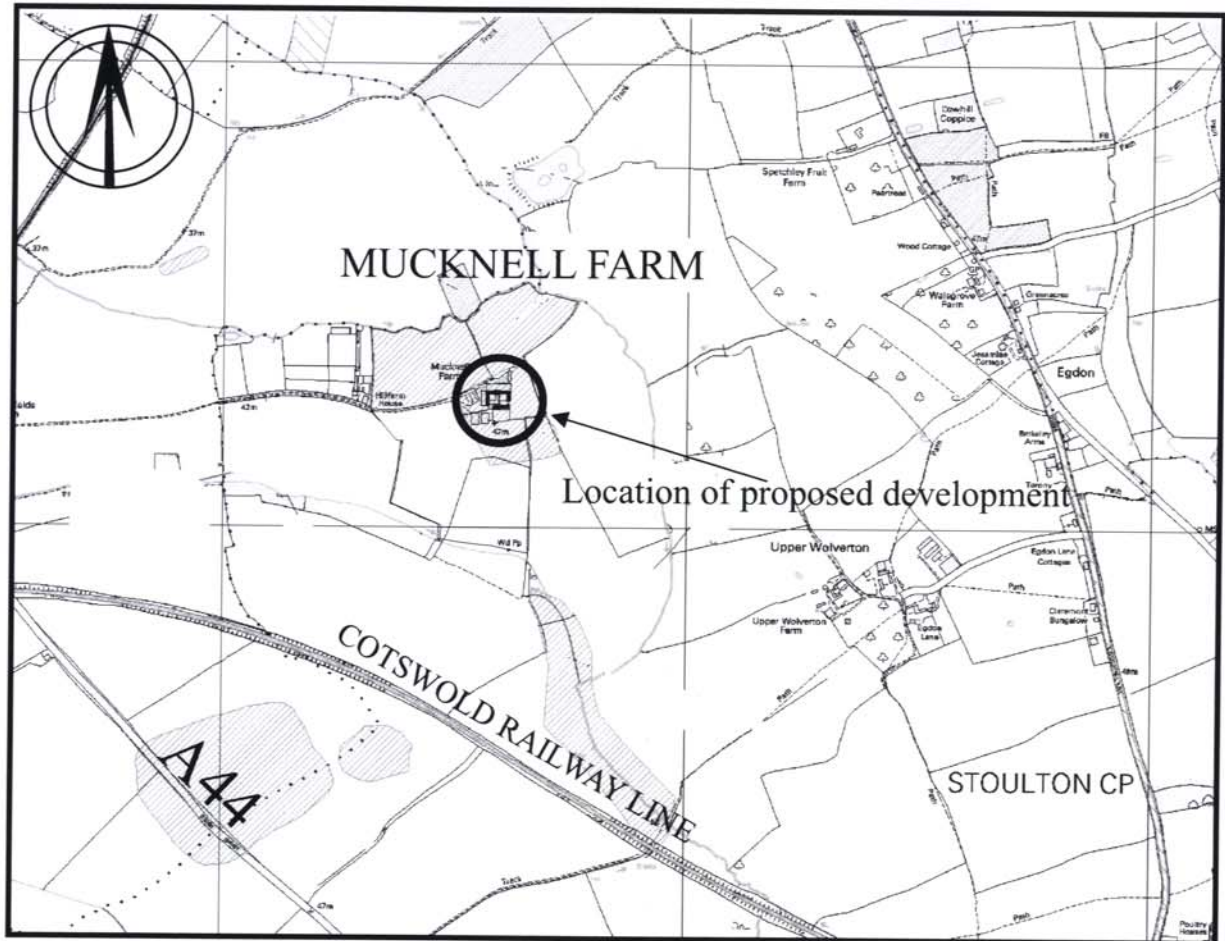
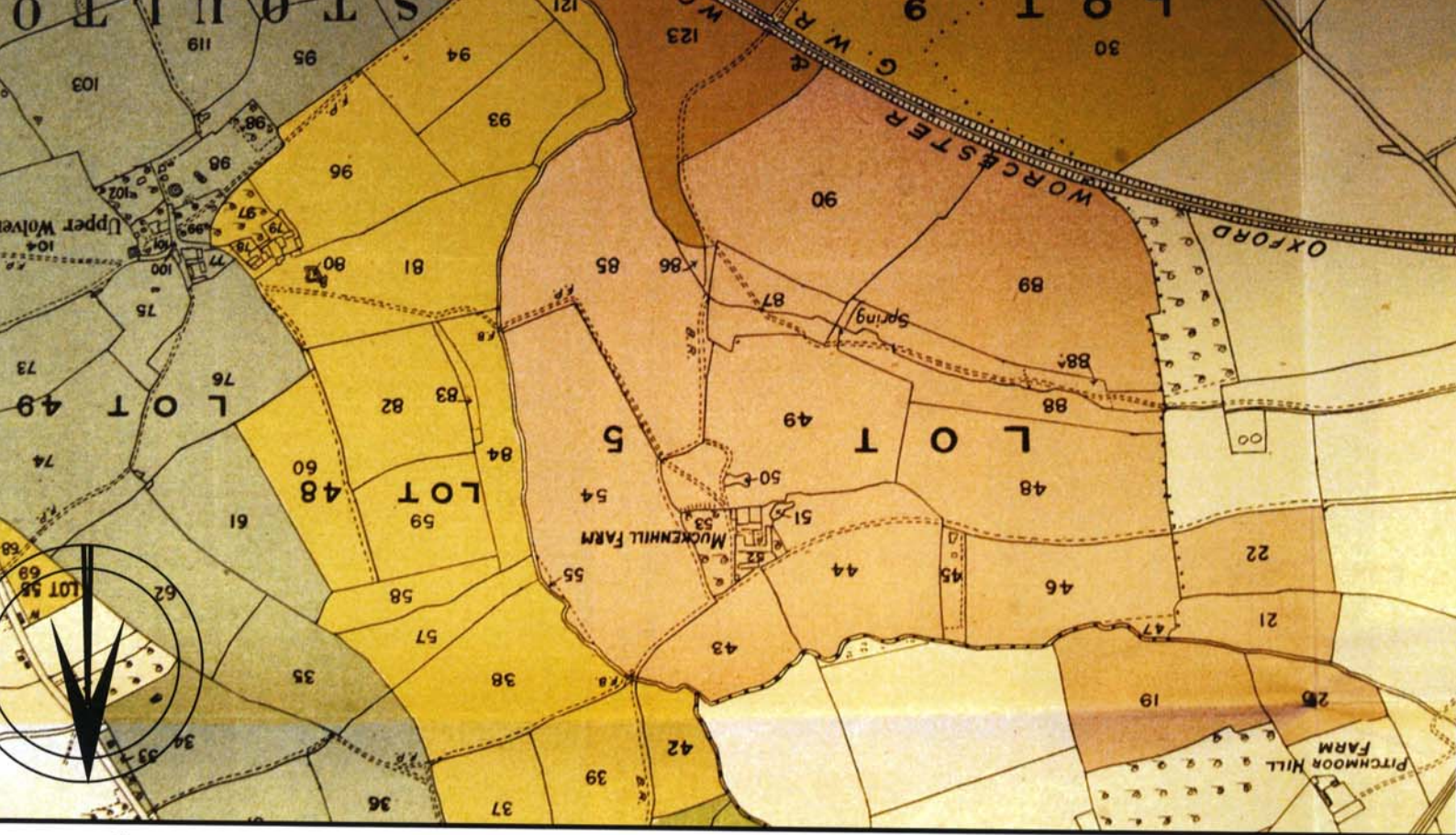


Figure 1: Location of Mucknell Farm, Stoulton



Mucknell Farm Stoulton - archaeological desk-top assessment

Mike Napthan Arch



Former "dairy"- note modern concrete base, and depth of recess



South facing elevation- note scar of removed recent extension and modern plastic windows and dormers



Former "dairy" and farmhouse - all visible fabric on this (number roof truss) is 19th C or later



Farm buildings from north-west



-east



framing (from Bay 3)



Northern cruck-blade (from Bay 2)



Original door to farm-yard - note surviving door-bar and L 18th C latch

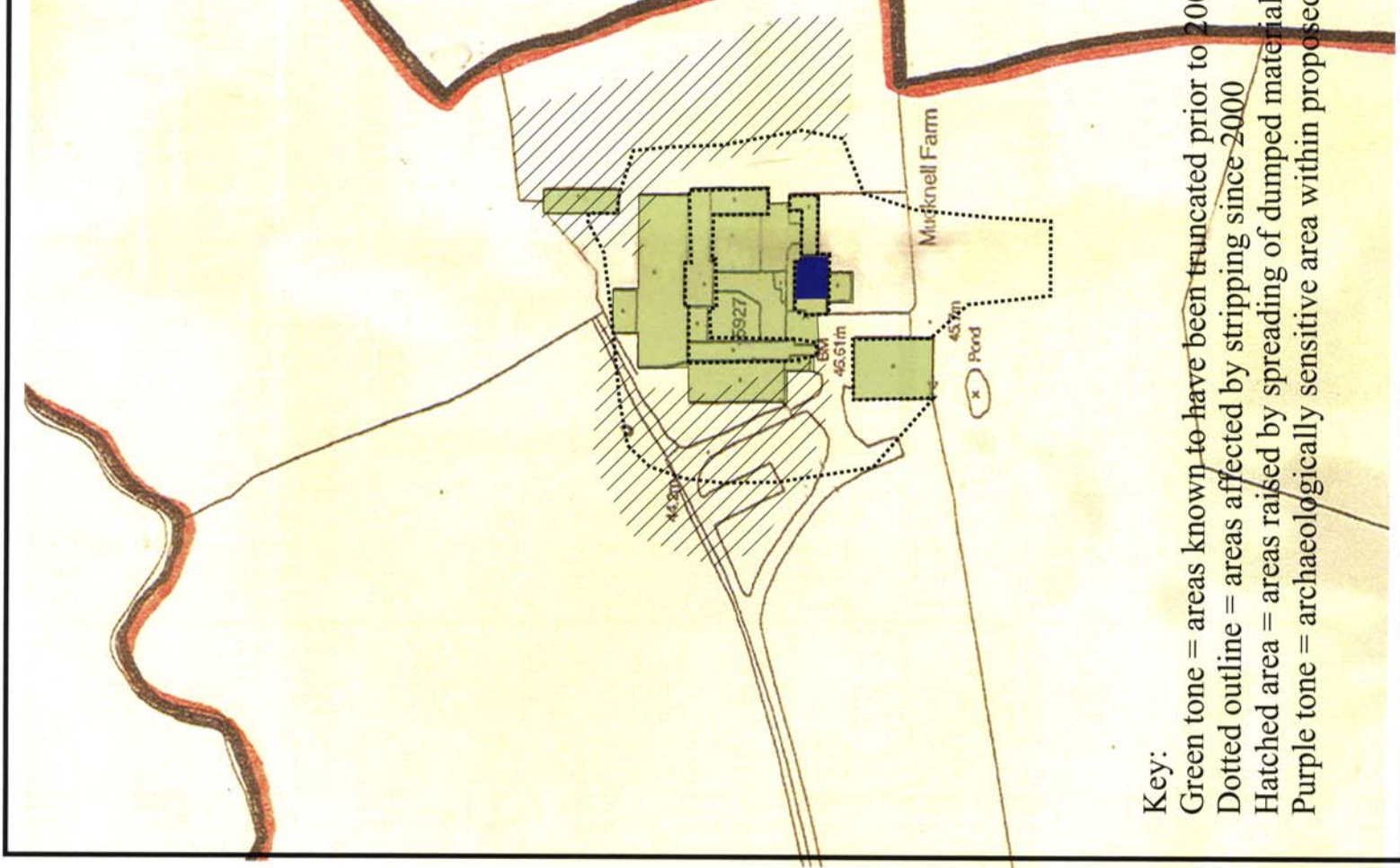


Typical 19th C 4 panel door (Bay 1)



Mid 19th C box-lock by Symonds of Birmingham

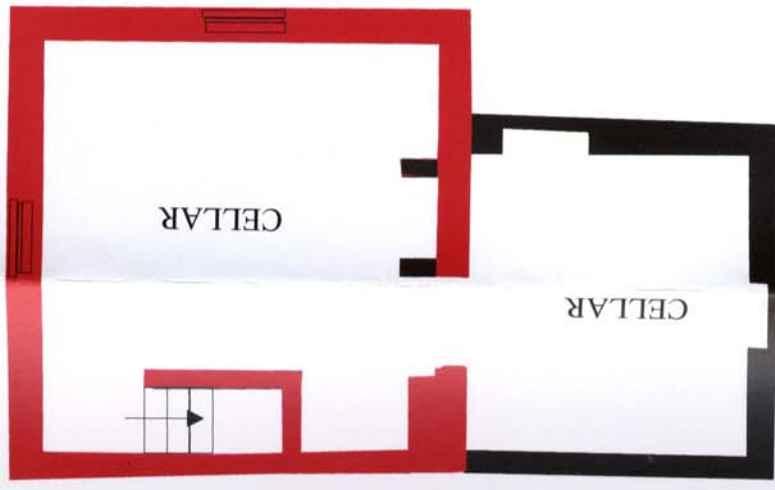




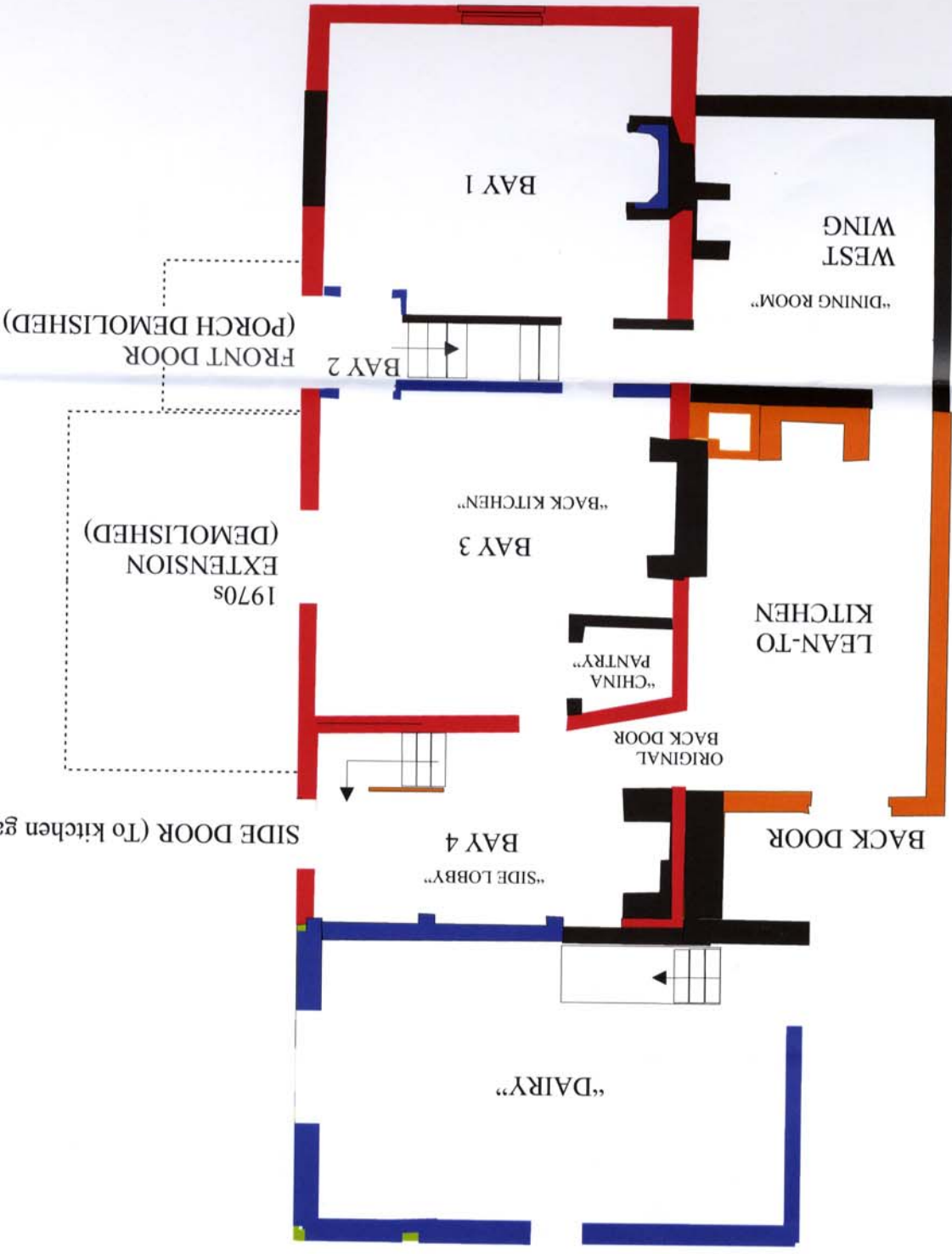
Key:

- Green tone = areas known to have been truncated prior to 2000
- Dotted outline = areas affected by stripping since 2000
- Hatched area = areas raised by spreading of dumped material
- Purple tone = archaeologically sensitive area within proposed

1970s
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 KEY:
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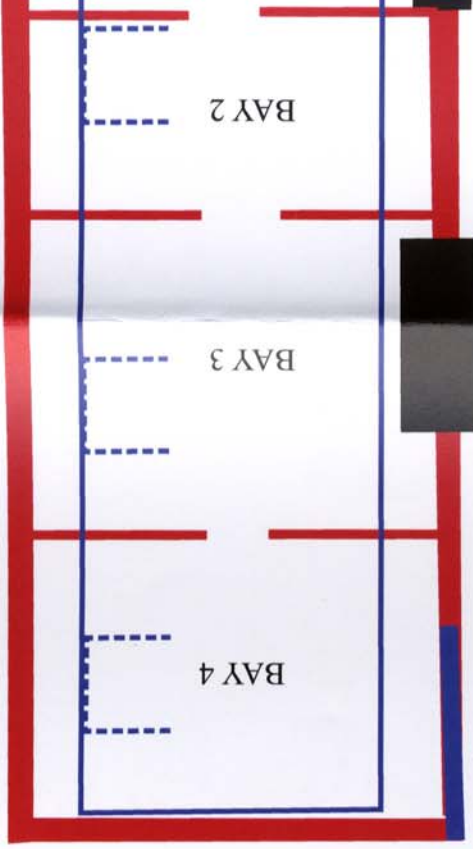
CELLARS



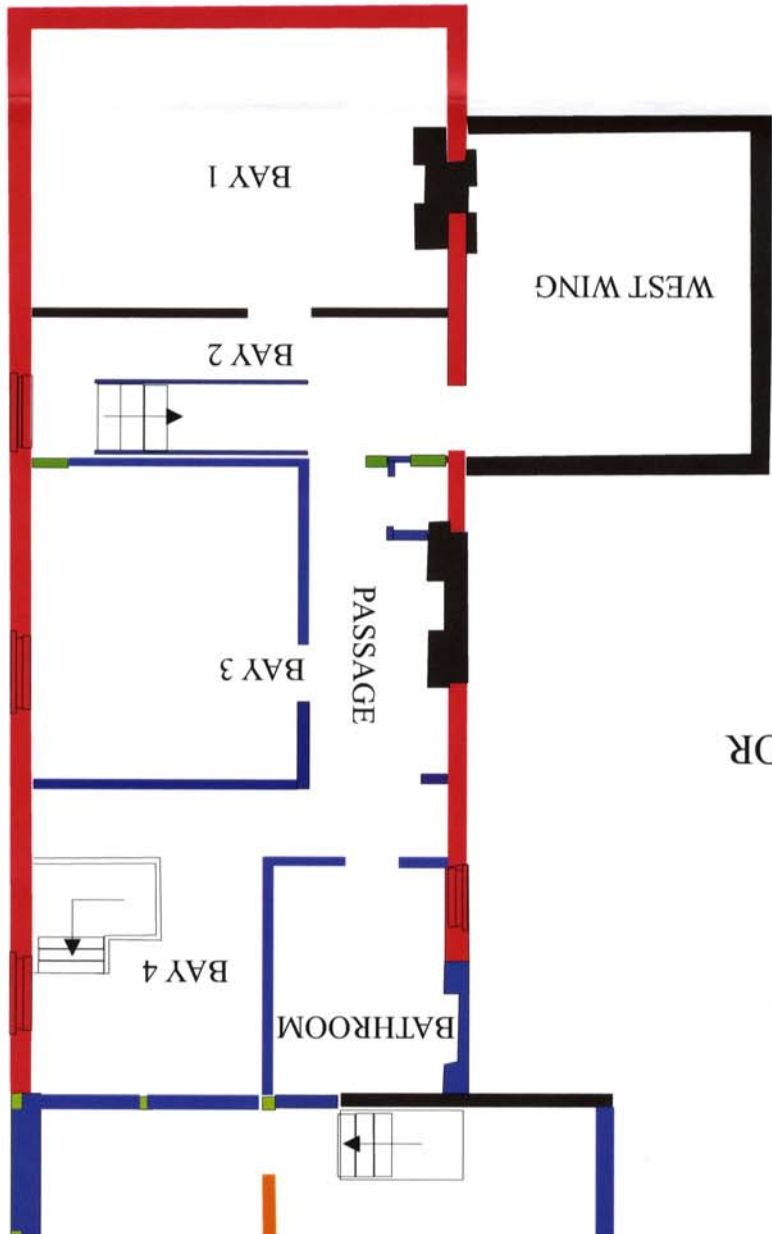
GROUND FLOOR



KEY:
■ 18th Century
■ Late 17th Cen



ATTICS



FIRST FLOOR



