

Report BAU 1483



nau archaeology

A Level 2 Historic Building Survey and Watching Brief at Lyngate Farm, Hethersett, Norfolk

HER ENF 125109



Prepared for
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August 2010



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<i>Issue 1</i>		

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Location: Lyngate Farm, Hethersett
District: South Norfolk
Grid Ref.: TG 1450 0479
HER No.: ENF 125109
OASIS Ref.: 80774
Client: David Futter Associates Ltd
Dates of Fieldwork: 4, 11 and 20 May 2010

Summary

In May 2010 a Level 2 historic building survey and watching brief was carried out by NAU Archaeology at Lyngate Farm House in the village of Hethersett, South Norfolk ahead of its demolition. The resulting survey identified a farmhouse of largely 19th-century date with 20th-century additions but preserving at its north-western elevation the gable wall of a probable 17th-century farmhouse of similar dimension to the core which survived into the 21st century.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

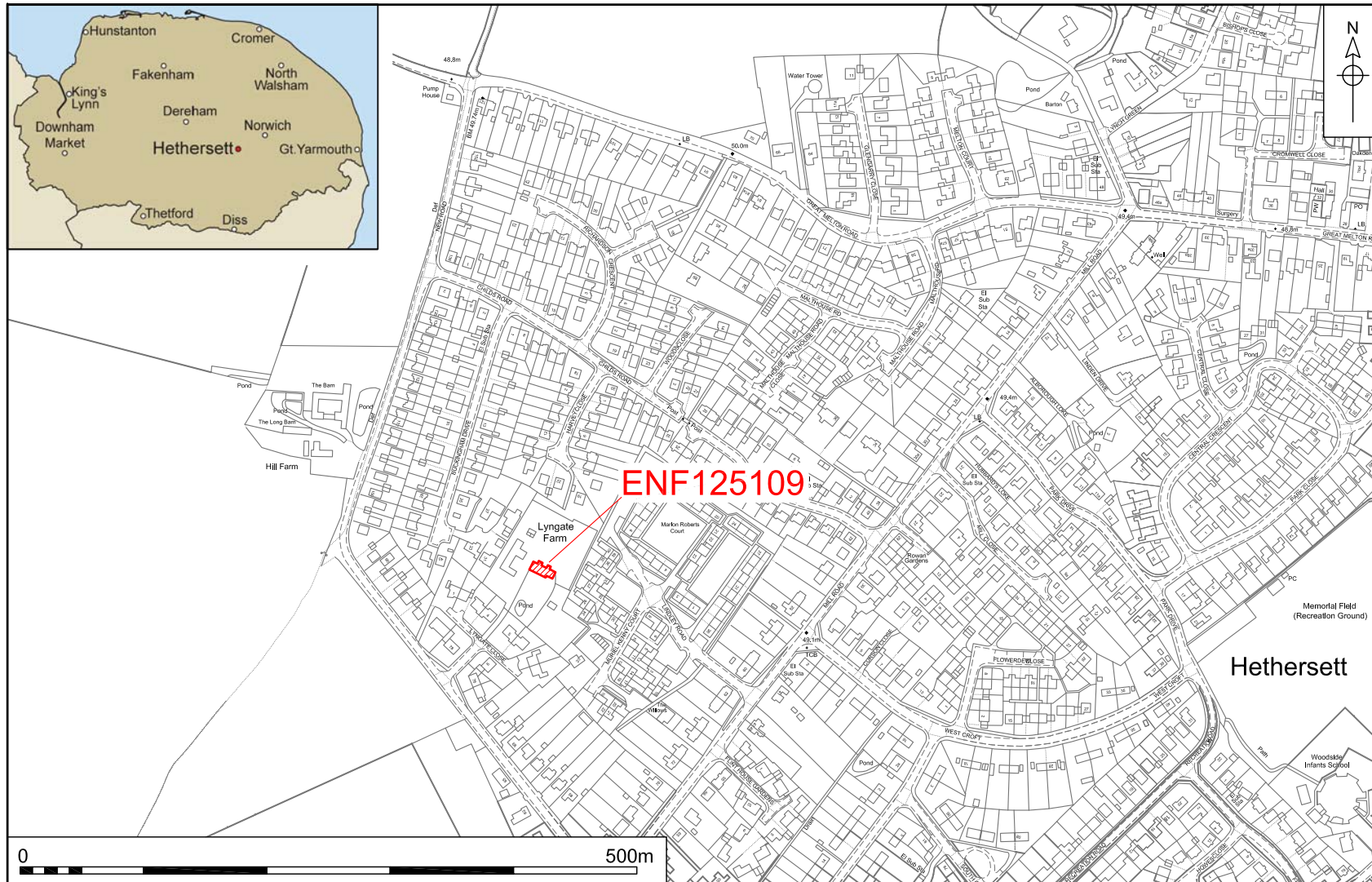
In May 2010 an historic building recording survey and watching brief was undertaken by NAU Archaeology at Lyngate Farm House in Hethersett ahead of and during its demolition and the subsequent redevelopment of the land. A project design was prepared by David Whitmore (ref: BAU1483/DW) at the request of the client David Futter Associates Ltd in response to a brief issued by Edwin Rose (4 July 2006)

The survey was designed to record details relating to the form, function, date, extent, phasing, character, status and significance of the building through a drawn, photographic and written record, the results of which are presented below.

The site archive is currently held by NAU Archaeology and on completion of the project will be deposited with the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service (NMAS), following the relevant policies on archiving standards.

2.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Lyngate Farm or Lynch Green as it was originally known can be identified on the Tithe map for the area of 1846 appearing in a similar form to that which survived into the 21st century. The farmhouse itself is visible along with the range of agricultural buildings to the north arranged around a central southern yard. Prior to this the farm maybe visible on Bryants map of 1826 (Barringer 1999) where structures are located at the end of a track but specific buildings are not identifiable. Faden's map (Barringer 1989) compiled almost 30 years earlier depicts a series of buildings in approximately the same location at the north-eastern end of Wymondham Common, one of which is likely to be Lynch Green Farmhouse but at this time New Road is yet to be built making identification difficult.



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Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:5000

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The objective of this survey was to create a record that included the following three elements:

A black and white photographic record using 35mm film

A drawn record, highlighting structurally significant features, fixtures and fittings

A written record

The work undertaken conforms to guidelines set out within *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good practice*; Level 2 survey. (English Heritage 2006). Additionally a watching brief was maintained during the demolition of the structure in case further archaeological evidence came to light.

Access to the building was good during both the initial survey and subsequent watching brief with the weather remaining fine throughout the survey.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Building Survey

4.1.1 Exterior

Lyngate Farm house was a rectangular building of red brick measuring 15.68m by 7.94m with two floors beneath a gabled roof of red pan tiles to the north-east and plain concrete tiles to the south-west (Plate1).



Plate 1. South-western elevation

Principle entry was gained from the south-western elevation through a modern lean-to porch located within the third of four bays from the north-west. Modern bay windows had been inserted in to the first and fourth bays while a plain casement window filled the second bay to the left of the porch surmounted by flat gauged

brick heads. There was some indication that the brickwork immediately to the north-west of this window had been altered probably in the 20th century but the earliest parts of the façade appeared to be of 18th- or 19th-century date using a soft red brick in a Flemish Bond. The upper floor reflected the lower floor but simple casement windows were used instead of bays while above the porch a smaller two-light window lit the stair landing.



Plate 2. North-eastern elevation and south-east gable, facing west

The south-eastern gable was largely obscured by concrete render and a later 20th-century extension but a small section on the ground floor towards the front of the house was available for examination (Plate 2). Here it was evident that soft red brick had been used in a Flemish bond in the same manner as the south-western elevation but perhaps in sympathy with the opposing gable it made use of burnt headers organised in a regular pattern. A single window on the first floor sat just to the north-east of the central chimney stack whilst internally a doorway directly beneath granted access to the modern single storey extension to the south-east.

The North-eastern Elevation

The north-eastern elevation sat at the rear of the house facing the back garden and was again of soft red brick in a Flemish bond (Plates 2 and 3). It had clearly been built as a two storey extension in order to increase the width of the house but the roof had also been extended to encompass it. A lean-to rear brick porch projected away from the north-western end and a brick set in to its south-eastern internal wall facing the external door bore the inscription 'Royal Wedding 1981 C D' (Plate 4). To the south east of the porch three casement windows served the ground floor with a fourth to the north-west while on the upper floor a total of six windows were displayed, four in the north-western half and two in the south-east.



Plate 3. North-eastern elevation facing south



Plate 4. Commemorative brick in rear porch

The North-western Elevation

Of most significance however was undoubtedly the north-western gable wall of the house which was probably the oldest part of the house (Plate 5). It was constructed of red heavily fired bricks measuring approximately 226mm x 110mm x 54mm (8 7/8" x 4 3/8" x 2 1/8") with large flint pebble inclusions up to 40mm in length. The bricks were laid in an English Bond using a yellow lime mortar with large aggregate and chalk inclusions and included numerous burnt headers and stretchers although without a discernable pattern. At the foot of the wall a plinth of

roughly faced coursed flint pebbles again in a lime mortar and topped with three courses of chamfered red brick rose to a height of 0.58m, projecting around 50mm from the face.



Plate 5. Close-up of north-western gable

A rectangular wooden window had been inserted into the centre of both the ground and first floors with that of the upper floor having evidently been partially blocked with soft red bricks to a height of five courses below the present sill (Plate 5). Above this window a rectangular stone indicating a construction date of 1877 probably referred to a significant renovation rather than the original construction of the house (Plate 6). Dividing the upper and lower halves of the gable a course of bricks chamfered along their front edge ran horizontally across the face serving as a splash guard to protect the lower portion of the building from rain and above this the wall was recessed by approximately 50mm. The earlier gable wall rose to a height of approximately 6.4m above which it had been raised by about another 0.8m in a later soft red brick using a Flemish Bond. At the same time the pitch of the roof had been reduced on the north-east side and the corners of the earlier gable reinforced with later soft red bricks. To the south-west of the date stone an iron wall tie with the initial 'B' survived but its corresponding initial to the north, if it originally had one, was missing (Plate 5).



Plate 6. Date plaque on north-western gable

4.1.2 Interior

Ground floor

(Fig. 2)

Internally the house had the appearance of a modern home with the front door opening into a hall way with staircase to the upper floor on the left (Plate 7). To the right a small reception room with a fire place against the gable wall was matched by a larger room at the opposing end of the house (Plates 8 and 9). This latter room was approximately twice the size of the former but had clearly been doubled in size with the removal of a central partition wall. A substantial longitudinal chamfered timber beam with sockets cut to receive joists long since replaced by a later floor denoted the partitions former location while a post at the north eastern end was perhaps more likely of mock Tudor providence (Plate 9). Behind these rooms to the north-east the narrow passage created by extending the rear of the building housed a bathroom at the north-western end, kitchen in the centre and laundry room to the south-east (Plates 10 and 11). All three were decorated in modern materials and divulged nothing of archaeological interest. The wall that divided these rooms from the front of the house probably followed the line of the original back wall but its brickwork was hidden from view behind internal plaster and so revealed nothing at this stage as to its construction materials. Examination of a niche located on the north-eastern wall of the larger of the two front rooms revealed the wall to be hollow behind and therefore probably the former location of a door between this room and the bathroom but its date could not be ascertained (Plate 12). Beyond the bathroom again to the north-east sat the rear porch containing the commemorative brick referred to earlier.

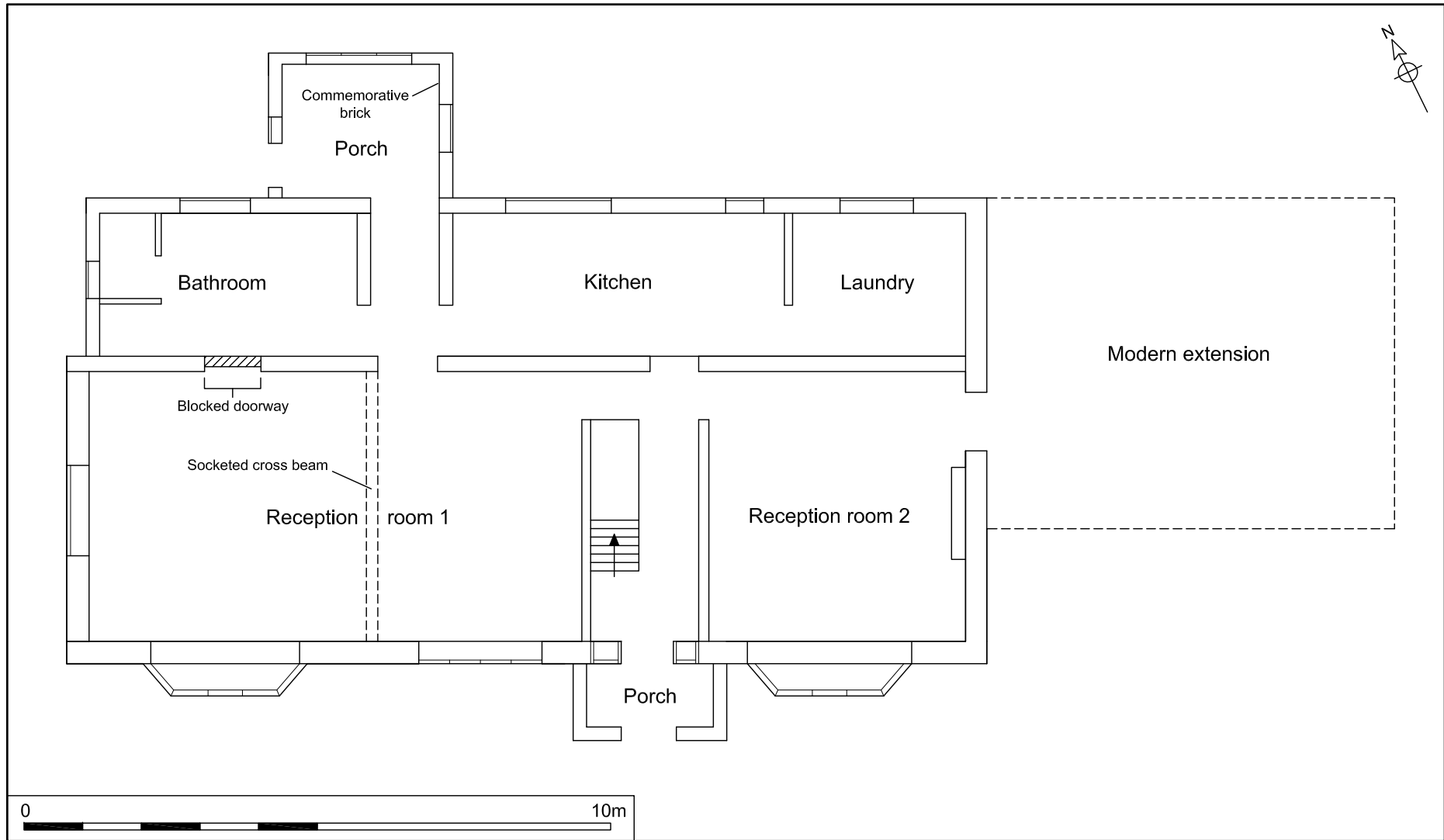


Figure 2. Ground floor plan. Scale 1:100



Plate 7. Entrance hall showing staircase facing north-east



Plate 8. Reception room 2



Plate 9. Reception room 1



Plate 10. Downstairs bathroom



Plate 11. Kitchen with laundry room beyond, facing south-east



Plate 12. Niche in Reception room 1

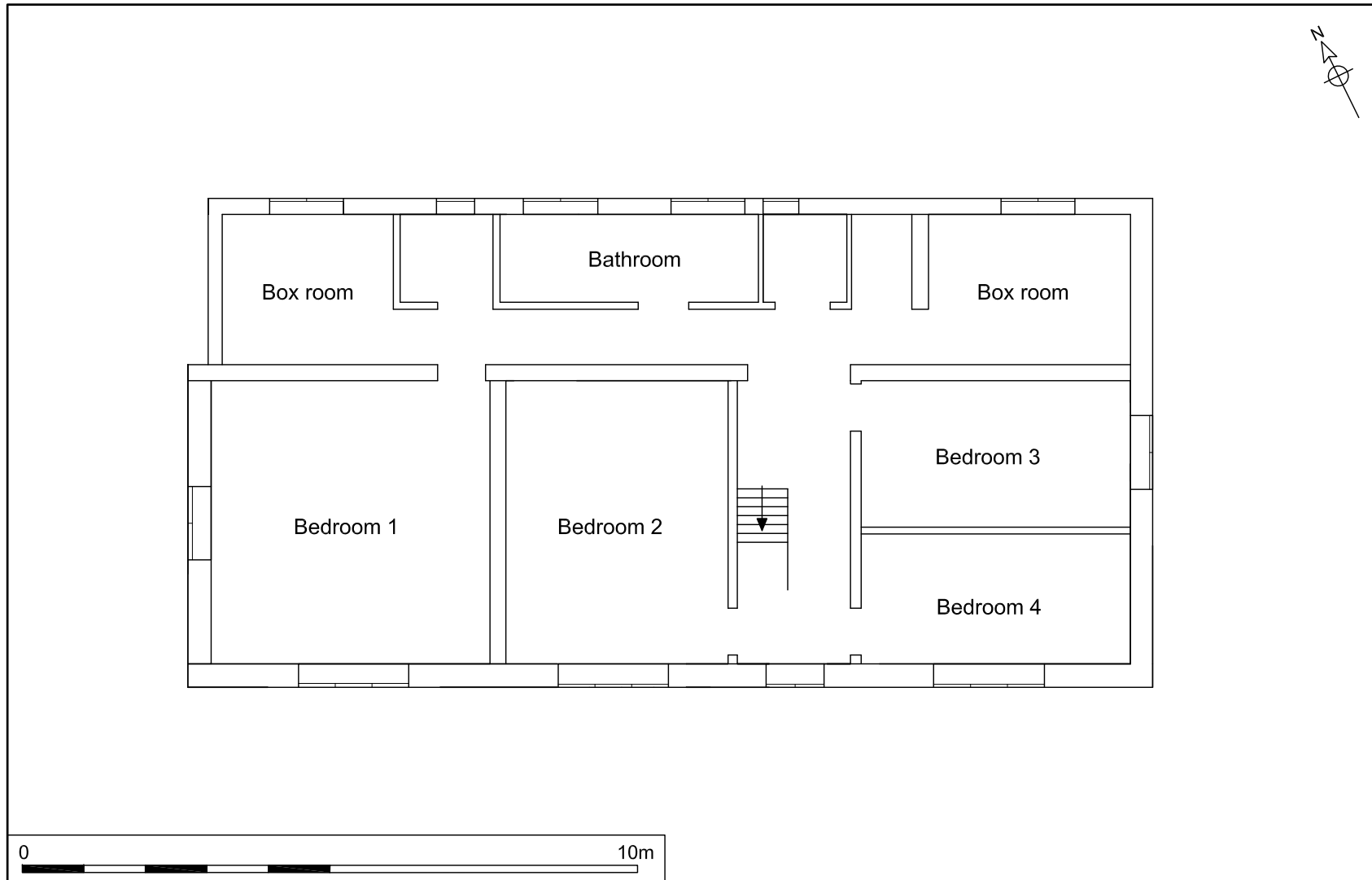


Figure 3. First floor plan. Scale 1:100

First floor

(Fig. 3)

The upstairs consisted of four bedrooms, two at the western end lying above the larger of the downstairs reception rooms (Reception room 1) and two smaller rooms at the southern end (Plate 13 and 14). The northern extension housed a bathroom and toilet at the centre with box rooms at either end, all of which were connected by a narrow longitudinal corridor that adjoined the main house (Plate 15). All of the rooms were internally plastered and decorated revealing no features of archaeological interest.



Plate 13. Bedroom 3, facing south-east



Plate 14. Bedroom 1, facing north



Plate 15. Upstairs corridor facing south-east

4.2 Watching brief

The demolition of the house took place over the course of ten days during which two visits were paid to the site by the author (Plate 16). Little additional information could be gained at either visit except to confirm the absence of any further 17th-century work associated with the house. It was also possible to establish that the internal wall which probably once formed the external elevation of the structure prior to the extension to the north-east was probably contemporary with the south-western elevation in that it used the same brick and bond in its construction (Plate 17).



Plate 16. North-western elevation during demolition



Plate 17. Construction of internal wall during demolition

4.3 The Stone Finial

In the garden of the house a carved stone finial lay on its side with no apparent connection to the present house (Plate 18).

It consisted of a squared block of shelly oolitic limestone 0.27m by 0.44m in plan and standing 0.32m high with a square hollowed out socket in the top. It was heavily decorated but had been both eroded and damaged resulting in the loss of much of its detail. A second piece 0.45m in length and 0.14m square formed a point at one end and was carved of the same limestone as the first. It fitted comfortably into the square socket of the large block to form a pointed finial as might be seen upon the gable apex of a church. A small round hole had been bored into one side of the finial just below the point to a depth of 7mm.



Plate 18. Base and finial, with 0.2m scale

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

Lyngate Farmhouse has clearly undergone numerous alterations over the course of its life but the evidence suggests little of the original structure survived. The north-western elevation probably dates to the 17th-century with its use of English Bond coursing with heavily fired bricks. The large flint inclusions are likely to be due to the lack of refinement in processing the natural clays, and the brittle texture of the brick the result of limitations in the control of the firing process. Both are indicative of a 17th-century or earlier date and the exclusion of other brick types within the wall as originally constructed supports such a date. The date stone towards the apex is therefore almost certainly a later insertion and may well be contemporary with the softer red brick lain in a Flemish Bond that seems to form the majority of the remaining walls. Despite examination of the structure during demolition no further evidence of the 17th-century phase could be found in the walls and therefore it seems likely that the building was, with the exception of the north-western gable wall heavily rebuilt in the later 19th-century using the softer Norfolk red bricks. That no other walls of the earliest phase remain suggests the building must have been in a particularly poor state of repair or that perhaps rebuilding took place in a more piecemeal fashion. The latter explanation might better explain the retention of the one wall that remains. Nevertheless the fortunate preservation of this gable wall allows us to postulate a height of at least 6.4m for the original structure and a width of approximately 4.6m. The length is more difficult to determine but based upon the available map evidence it certainly would have had a length of between 14m and 15m by the 1840s. The chamfered cross beam in the main reception room may well be a remnant of the earlier house but if this is the case then it has certainly been repositioned and may therefore have come from a number of sources.

It is not clear whether the addition of the north-eastern extension was completed at the same time as the 19th-century rebuilding but the brickwork and style of coursing were very similar. The single storey extensions to the south-west are all of late 20th-century date as is the porch to the rear of the property. The commemorative brick set into the interior wall face appears to one of a special series produced by the London Brick Company. Apparently one in every twelve produced at the Newton Longville factory bore the design and according to LBC "They will be inside houses and are for archaeological interest in the future as much as anything"¹ (LBC employee pers. comm.) The finial is probably of Barnack stone and therefore could well date to before the mid 15th century when this type of stone was quarried out. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the former owner of the house was involved in church restorations and as such this probably accounts for its presence in the garden.

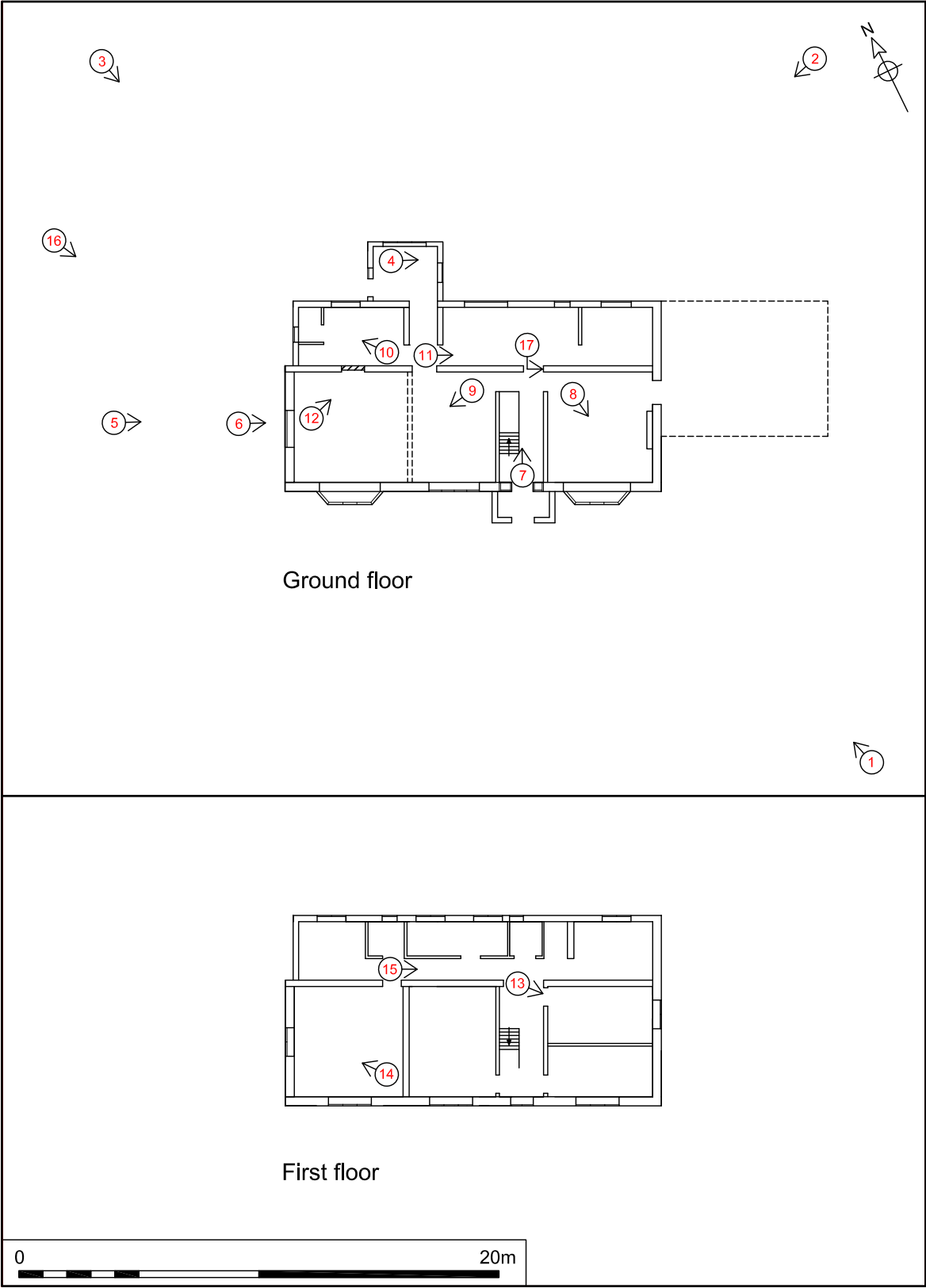
¹ <http://www.miltonkeynes.co.uk/the-way-we-were/July-12th-2007.3003637.jp>

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was carried out by the author with graphics prepared by David Dobson. The report was edited by Jayne Bown.

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Appendix 1. Photographic locations. Scale 1:250