

**‘The Old Thatches’, Rookwood Lane,
Preston St Mary
PSM 031**

Archaeological Excavation Report

SCCAS Report No. 2012/030

Client: Mr N. Short

Author: David Gill and Mo Muldowney

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Archaeological Monitoring Report

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Summary

An archaeological excavation at Preston St Mary revealed that the now-demolished property known as 'The Old Thatches', was built directly over an earlier medieval building and preserved evidence of the previous occupation of the site. The Old Thatches was a Grade II listed, timber-framed building which dated to the first half of the 17th century but had its origins in the 16th. A thatch fire and the subsequent removal of the listed status by English Heritage allowed the remains to be demolished.

The earliest evidence of occupation was a pit and associated gully that produced 'hand-made' pottery that exhibited traits which were arguably Iron Age or Early Anglo-Saxon in date. There is a known Iron Age presence in the area but no Early Anglo-Saxon finds are listed on the HER.

The next phase of activity began after the Norman Conquest and a moderately sized component of the pottery assemblage suggests occupation of the site from at least the 12th century. The earliest cut features may date from around the 12th-13th century and included structural features indicating a probable house site and a former plot boundary. The building was probably a domestic dwelling as to the rear of the house was a yard which included a domestic bread or malting oven that contained burnt grain.

The origins of Old Thatches date to the 16th century and several timbers possibly from its predecessor were re-used. The timber frame was raised on shallow-set dwarf walls and only the chimney of the later 17th century range left any identifiable evidence and is further illustration of why very few previously rural medieval house sites are discovered by archaeological excavation. It is interesting to note that virtually no pottery finds dating from the 400 year occupation of Old Thatches were recovered from the site.

1. Introduction

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service undertook a programme of archaeological excavation of the below-ground deposits within the footprint of the property known as 'The Old Thatches', Rookwood Lane, Preston St Mary. The work was carried out on the 10th and 11th August 2008 in accordance with a Brief and Specification produced by Dr. Jess Tipper of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Conservation Team (Appendix 1), in order to fulfil the requirements of a planning application (B/06/00745) and ahead of proposed residential redevelopment of the site.

The Old Thatches was a Grade II listed, timber-framed building which dated to the first half of the 17th century but had its origins in the 16th. The property had suffered severe fire damage and removal of the listed status by English Heritage allowed the remains to be demolished and a new building constructed in its place. As a condition of the consent to demolish the remains were the subject of a Level 3 historic building recording (Alston 2007, Appendix 4).

2. Research Aims

The immediate project aims were to provide a record of all archaeological deposits which would otherwise be damaged or removed by development and to produce a permanent archive which would be deposited with Suffolk HER.

The academic aims were to investigate the below ground evidence left by the timber-framed building and its potential predecessors. Rookwood Lane is named after Robert Rookwood who bought the medieval manor in 1565 and the site is believed to be a longstanding domestic plot with medieval origins. The building survey identified that the upstanding remains included a 16th century wing which was unusual in form. There was inconclusive evidence as to whether this was a complete small building in its own right or a fragment of a larger one (Alston 2007) and it was hoped that excavation might resolve this.

A broader research aim is the study of how box-framed structures such as ‘The Old Thatches’ impact upon the ground and the signatures they leave in the archaeological record. Unlike buildings of a greater age, which were generally ‘earth-fast’, box-framed buildings tended to sit upon low footings built onto the existing ground surface with little or no subsurface impact, thus they are often more difficult to identify and it is probable that their sites have frequently not been recognised in the past. This project offered the opportunity of studying a known site and characterising the evidence that such structures might be expected to leave behind.

3. The Excavation

3.1 Site location

The site is located approximately 1km to the north of Preston St Mary (TL 9410 5133) (Fig. 1) and is situated on the north side of Rookwood Lane which leads westwards from Mortimer’s Farm. It lies at approximately 70m OD near the top of a north-east facing valley side overlooking the River Brett. The excavated area was L-shaped and sited entirely within the footprint of the ‘The Old Thatches’ (Fig. 2) covering an area of just under 100sq m.

3.2 Geology and topography

The development area is situated on a plateau from which the land slopes down gently in an easterly direction and the underlying geology is recorded as being a chalky till deposit, as was observed in the excavation area.

3.3 Archaeological and historical background

Prior to being removed from the listings ‘The Old Thatches’ was a Grade II (LBN 277074) timber-framed domestic house dating to the 17th century and was based on an earlier 16th century building of which the west wing remained. The ‘cross-passage’ layout of the 17th century building echoed an earlier design tradition suggesting it was from the beginning of the century and the proportions implied a property status which was below that of a yeoman farmer which was likely to have been occupied by a husbandman farming 30-40 acres (Alston 2007).

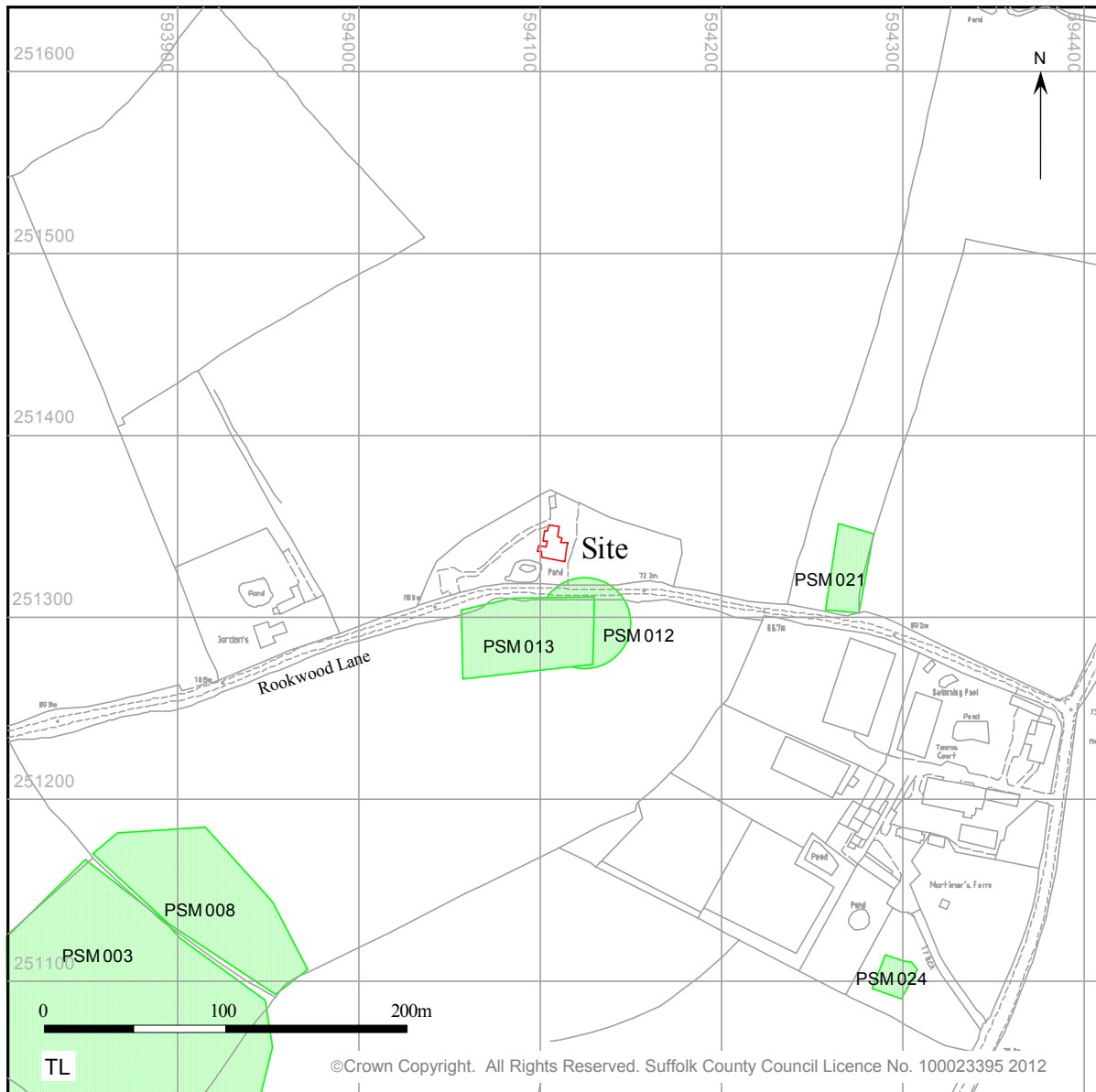
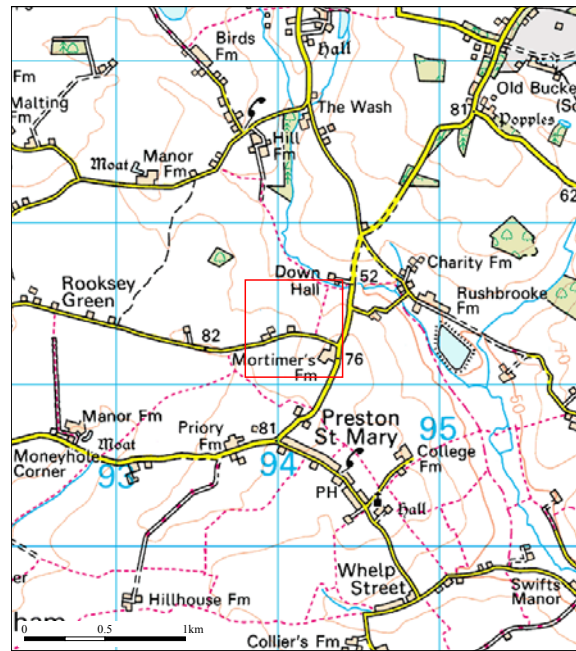
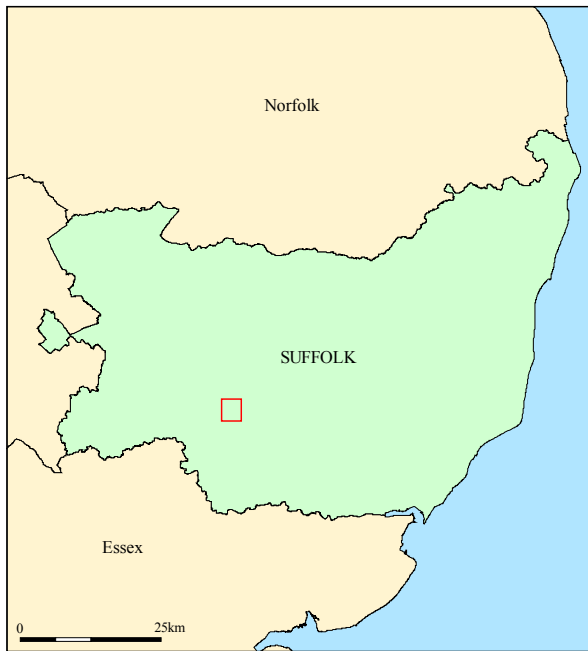


Figure 1. Location map showing the HER entries referred to in the text (in green)

The site is located in an area of historic interest. A number of finds which have been recovered from nearby are documented in the Suffolk HER (Historic Environment Record). Medieval finds have been recovered from directly opposite the site, a collection of 13th to 14th century pottery sherds and large flint flints thought to derive from cobbling (PSM 013), and a 15th or 16th century iron hunting arrowhead (PSM Misc) 580m to the north-east.

The earliest find recorded is a Neolithic polished axe (PSM 012) which was found on the south side of Rookwood Lane, immediately opposite the subject site and a Bronze Age bronze awl (PSM 010) was found 500m to the south-east-east amongst a Roman finds scatter.

Later prehistoric finds are predominantly Iron Age and comprise a combination of ceramic and metal objects (PSM 008 and PSM 003) identified during field walking on Priory Farm, less than 400m to the south-west. Similar Roman finds were also recovered from these areas as well as from a location 470m to the south-south-west – also on Priory Farm – where a scatter of (Roman) greyware sherds was found.

4. Methodology

After the timber frame was dismantled by the contractor, the surviving structural remains comprised the dwarf walls which had formed the plinth to the timber superstructure and the two fireplaces. The central fireplace in the east wing and some of the dwarf walls of the 17th century range were original to the building of the house. The fireplace in the west gable was a 19th century addition and where the building had been underpinned in the 20th century sections of the dwarf walls had been rebuilt in modern brickwork and concrete.

Excavation was carried out by hand and all deposits were recorded using SCCAS pro forma sheets. All plans and sections were drawn at 1:20 and a series of colour photographs were taken using a high-resolution digital camera.

Two environmental samples were taken. No on-site metal detecting was carried out.

The site archive is kept in the main SCCAS store at Bury St Edmunds under HER no. PSM 031, and a digital copy of the report has been submitted online to the Archaeological Data Service: <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit>

5. Results

5.1 Introduction

The monitoring revealed the presence of deposits and features dating from a pre-medieval period to the 15th century lying directly beneath the floorplan of Old Thatches. In preparation for the building's construction during the 16th-17th century, a level platform had been created to overcome the natural slope of the site. As a consequence of this the west end of the site was truncated to the surface of the natural clay whereas 'ancient' topsoil, into which medieval features were cut, still existed across the east side of the investigation area. This soil horizon was below the finished floor level of the new development and was not removed.

Features could be dated using artefact spotdates and stratigraphic relationships and two distinct periods of activity, pre-medieval and medieval, were evident on the site.

5.2 Pre-medieval

Pit 0038 was found in the north-eastern portion of the site. Its full extent was not seen as it lay beyond the limits of the excavation area, but it was oval in plan with a diameter of 1.54m by 0.1m deep. The pit was filled with a fine silt, 0039, which was mottled with a mineralised staining possibly suggesting water logged soils and lined with a layer of flint cobbles along its base. A small associated gully, 0041, was aligned north-east to south-west and ran for 2.4m between pit 0038 (south-west) and flint cobble layer 0030 (north-east). The gully was 0.2m wide and it is suggested that the downward slope of the gully base away from pit 0038 indicate that it might have carried liquid away from the pit as a drain. Because the south-west edge of pit 0038 lay beyond the limit of excavation it was not possible to determine whether gully 0041 extended further in that direction. It did not extend beyond the medieval flint layer 0030. There was no discernable relationship between pit 0038 and gully 0041, which reinforces the suggestion that they were linked and in use at the same time.

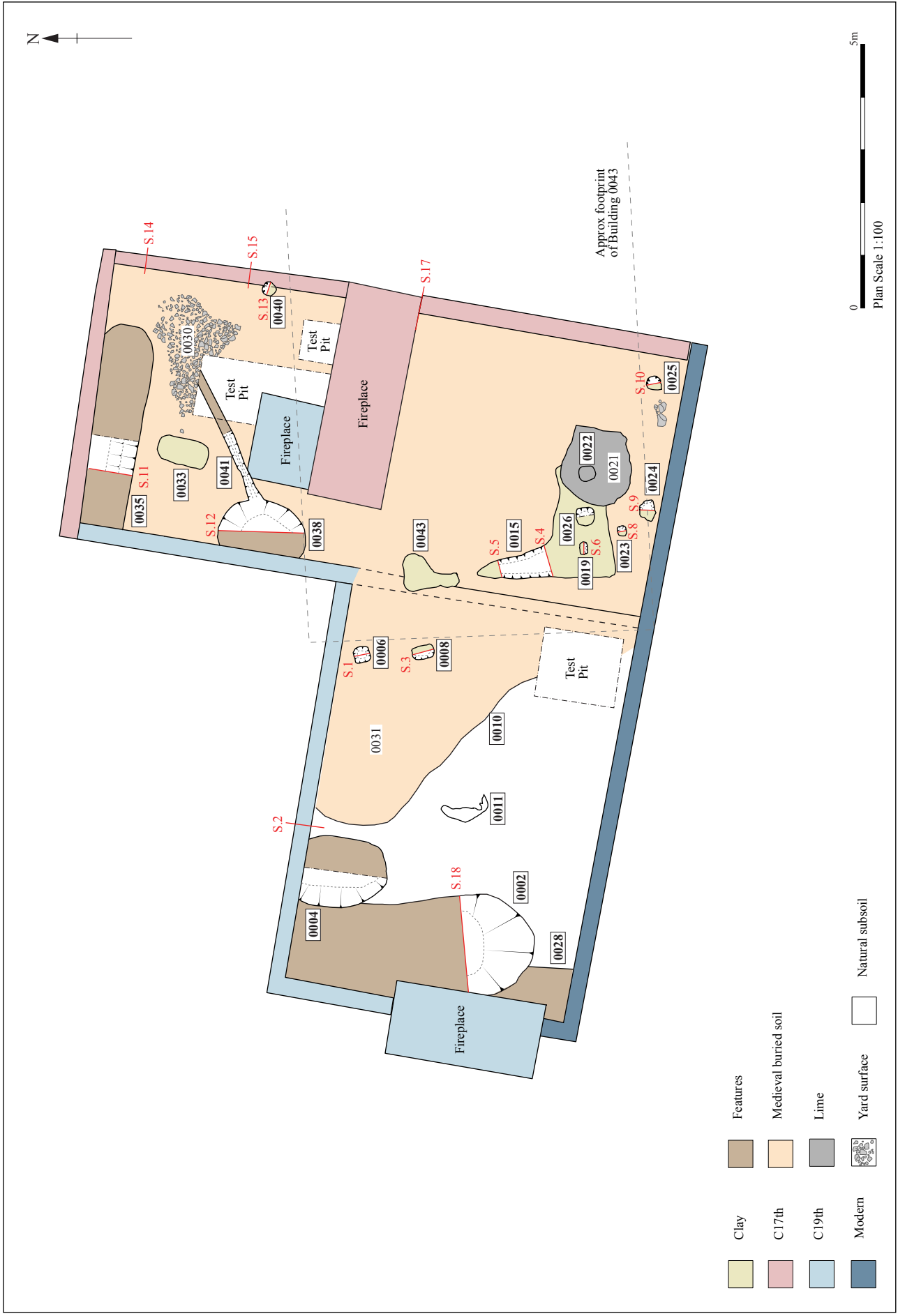


Figure 2. Site plan showing the extent of the excavation area

Five sherds of 'hand-made' pottery were recovered from the pit and gully. The vessels share characteristics with Iron Age and Early Anglo-Saxon pottery and whilst they certainly represent a pre-medieval phase they could not be dated precisely with confidence. The pottery was over-fired or burnt but exhibited no traits of industrial activity or residues. Animal bone was also collected and a soil sample (S2) from gully 0041 produced sparse results that included a small number of cereal grains.

5.3 Medieval

Pottery suggested activity on the site from the very beginning of the medieval period but it was found in association with later finds. The earliest cut features may date from around the 12th-13th century and included structural features indicating a probable house site and a former plot boundary. The plot boundary and the possible building were aligned the same way but at a slightly different angle to the later timber-framed building suggesting a small change in orientation of the layout of the property when the boundaries were altered in the 16th century. The medieval features represent the beginning of the continuous occupation of the site with later medieval features dating up to and including the period of the construction of 'The Old Thatches' being identified beneath its footprint.

Boundary ditches

At the far west end of the site two features were identified (ditch 0002 and ditch 0045) which appear to define the former medieval property boundary. The earliest of these was ditch 0045, which was 2m wide by 0.8m deep and had a v-shaped profile with a rounded base. Single fill 0028 was pale orange brown silty clay and contained a tip-line of mid 13th-14th century pottery fragments down its eastern edge.

Ditch 0002 cut ditches 0045 on its east side and was also aligned north to south. The planned length was 4.4m long and it terminated less than 1m from the southern limit of the excavation area. Ditch 0002 had a very shallow, concave profile at no more than 0.18m deep and contained single fill 0003, greenish brown silty clay. Finds were recovered dating to the 14th-15th century and this feature is believed to be a redefinition of ditch 0045.

Building 0043

Evidence for the shallow (truncated) remains of the west end of a probable building was located in the south-east corner of the excavated area and comprised a spread of yellow clay, 0012 and an associated square-edged slot, 0014. A series of postholes packed with clay, similar to that of spread 0012 and aligned around its perimeter, are also likely to be components of this structure.

The spread of clay 0012 was 2.44m long by 2.1m wide and thought to be the vestigial remains of a floor or wall. The spread was roughly triangular in plan with straight edges on its south and west sides which met to form a right-angle at the south west corner of the putative building (Fig. 2). The clay was compacted and mixed with chalk; it was generally 0.06-0.08m deep but was deeper where it infilled linear slot 0014, which ran along and formed its west edge. The slot was 0.18m deep with a flat base and a wide slightly uneven profile; the bottom of the slot was very compacted suggesting it may have been the setting for a sill-beam. Three fills within the slot were identified; the lowest fill 0017 was 0.06m thick and comprised clay that followed the west edge. This was overlain by compact dark brown silt 0016 (0.12m thick), which in turn was overlain by 0015 (a continuation of spread 0012), loosely packed chalky clay with fragments of burnt clay and charcoal flecks. The fills were not contained by the cut of the slot but spilled out over its edges to the east indicating that the slot was open when this material was dispersed. Finds were recovered from all three fills, which suggested a spot date for the infilling of the feature in the 12th century. Immediately to the north of slot 0014 was a similar roughly triangular-shaped spread of yellow clay (0043) measuring 0.96m long by 0.7m wide (Fig. 2). This deposit was likely to have been a continuation of 0012/0014, forming the opposing north-west corner of a possible structure (approximately 3.8m wide).

Pairs of postholes (0006 and 0008) and (0024 and 0025) were recorded around the outside of the spread and seemed to be orientated parallel to the spread's edges at a distance of 1m and 0.8m respectively. The postholes were all filled with yellow chalky clay similar to spread 0012 and flat-bottomed, posthole 0024 and 0025 were the same approximate depth as slot 0014 (c.0.2m) whilst 0006 and 0008 were 0.4m deep; posthole 0008 showed evidence of a central post-pipe.

Further postholes (0019 and 0020) were located around the south-west corner of the putative floor; both were filled with clay and 0019 was sealed beneath layer 0016 which also infilled the slot 0014. An isolated clay-packed posthole 0040 was located beneath the north to south aligned 17th century footing of Old Thatches. It was circular in plan and was straight-sided, 0.34m in diameter and 0.16m deep. In appearance it was similar to the postholes recorded at the west end of the building but whether it was part of the same structure is uncertain. None of the postholes produced finds.

All of the features associated with the suggested building cut overlay a buried medieval topsoil layer. Within the supposed area of the early building this was numbered 0026 and outside it, variously as 0010, 0031, 0032 and 0034. It is interesting to note that no finds were collected from this deposit within the footprint of the building but were plentiful outside it and no pitting occurred within the suggested building footprint.



Plate 1. West end of possible building 0043 facing north. End of the building identified by the spread of yellow clay to the left of the scale. Chalky area in the foreground is the residue of lime, potentially material prepared for the building of Old Thatches in the 17th century. (2m scale)

External yard area

An external yard with potential evidence for small-scale industrial activity was located in the north-east corner of the excavation area and comprised a hearth floor made up of a rectangular area of heat-affected clay, and a flint cobble layer. While there was no solid evidence for the structure of the north (rear) wall of the early building the features in this

part of the site clearly were outside it. The hearth floor and cobbling were adjacent features and laid at the same level on the surface of the buried medieval topsoil (here numbered 0031) and sealed beneath a layer of clay, 0029, which was laid in the 17th century to create the floor of 'Old Thatches'.

The hearth floor (0033) was 0.9m long by 0.5m wide and 0.02m thick. There was an apparent even distribution of heat across the area with a thin spread of ash around the south and west edges. Heating in this area had also affected the surrounding soil, suggesting continued usage rather than a single firing event. No finds were found within the oven itself but pottery dating to 13th-14th century was found sealed beneath the hearth floor in the buried topsoil layer (context 0032)

Flint layer 0030 covered an irregular area of approximately 3m sq. and was sited in the north-east corner of the excavation area. It was made up of closely-packed medium to



Plate 2. Flint yard surface 0030 and burnt clay patch 0033, to the north of Old Thatches' fireplace. Photographed facing south (2m scale)

large-sized cobbles laid a single stone deep; the recorded area of the flints was thought to be close to its full extent and the planned south and east sides, true edges. The extent of the north side of the spread mirrored the edge of ditch 0035; the ditch was not visible when the flints were planned as it was masked within the buried soil, but the flints may have been cut by or respected the ditch. Late finds (15th-16th century) were

collected from the surface just to the north of the flints whilst the pottery collected off the surface of layer 0030 dated to no later than the end of 13th century.

The ditch, 0035, was oriented east to west and terminated adjacent to the flint metalled surface (0030). It extended beyond the limit of excavation to the north and west and was at least 3.6m long by more than 0.8m wide and 0.72m deep. It had a vertical-sided u-shaped profile in the manner of a trench rather than an open ditch but the pattern of infilling suggested a prolonged existence. The lower fill 0037 was 0.84m thick dark silty clay overlain by a thin band of yellow clay (0044) up to 0.1m thick. The upper fill 0036 was dark brown silty clay, up to 0.32m thick. Finds were recovered from fill 0036 and 0037 and comprised multiple sherds of medieval pottery and animal bone fragments, with the pottery suggesting an origin in the 12th-13th century for the feature, which was finally filled in during the 14th–15th century. The ditch did not share the orientation of the former boundary ditches and early building but was at right angles to the hearth 0033 and its position signalled what was to become the limit of the building in the 17th century.

5.4 16th-18th century and undated features

West wing of Old Thatches

Very little remains in the archaeological record of the 16th century west wing of Old Thatches. The building survey suggested that it once extended further to the west but there was no indication of it continuing in the ground. On the centre line of the wing was an irregular area of burnt clay (0011) that measured 0.8m long by 0.4m wide. This is the remains of a central (?open) hearth or oven-type structure. There is no stratigraphic evidence to connect it to the 16th century building or an indication of a hearth position in the frame survey but the central location of this feature is noteworthy.

The west wing frame was underpinned at least twice; the south wall in the immediate past and the north wall (0013) probably in the 19th century when the chimney was also added. The underpinning seems to have been achieved by excavating around the outside of the building and beneath the sill beam (cut 0005, Fig. 3, S2) and laying the bricks from the outside, as the mortar is struck on the outer face only. The level of the natural subsoil, which is higher on the inside of the building than without, support this hypothesis and also imply that prior to the 19th century the sill beam sat directly on the

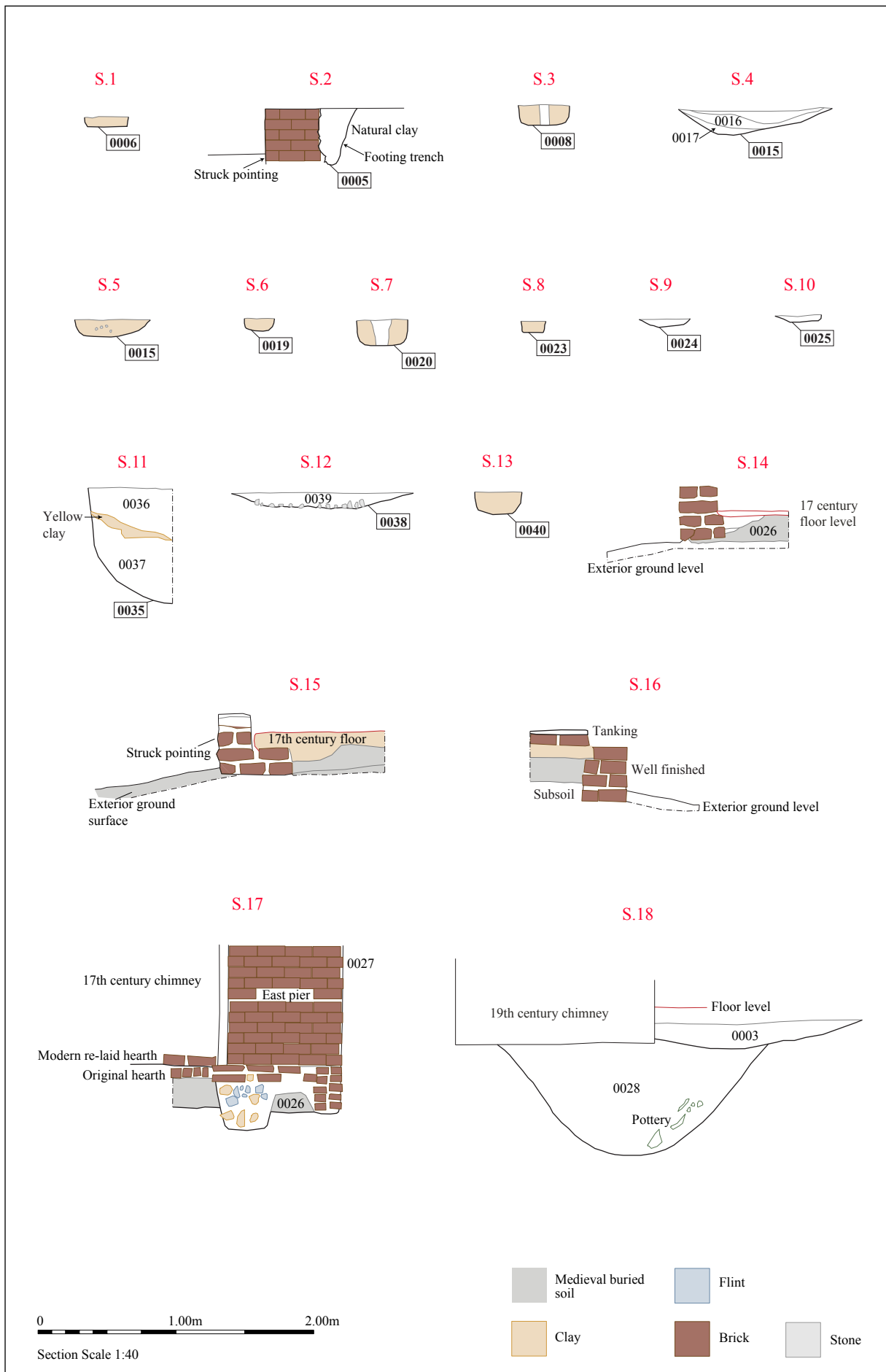


Figure 1. Sections

ground. The original sill beam survived to be recorded in the building survey at the eastern half of the north wall but the western half of it had been replaced.

Within the wing beneath the dwarf wall was a shallow pit (0004). This pit was 1.46m long by 1.24m wide and had a single fill composed of loose chalky clay from which 18th century finds were recovered. The position of the pit suggests that it was either a footing for a structural component within the building or an excavation as part of some works to alter the frame. The 16th century frame timbers above the pit have been replaced and there is no obvious explanation for this feature.

East wing of Old Thatches

The east wing of Old Thatches, which was built as an addition to the western one in the first half of 17th century, seems to have been constructed from the out set on a dwarf wall of which the east wall (0042), together with the original chimney, still remain. The dwarf wall was four brick courses high and lay in an unconventional bond ((?)a variant of English garden-bond) with the bottom two courses stepped out to form a foot on the inside only (Fig. 3, S14 and S15). The wall was cut into the medieval soil layer 0026/0031 and lay on the subsoil surface, the buried soil only existed on the interior of the building and the external ground level was lower than the internal. In the north half of the wing was a clay floor (or subfloor) 0029, original to the building which was laid directly over the projecting foot of the dwarf wall and sealed all of the medieval features.

The brick-built fireplace and chimney was constructed off a substantial below ground footing, 0027, made up of a cut trench packed with large, closely-spaced flints set in yellow clay (Fig. 3, S17 and pl. 3). The footing follows the shape of the fireplace piers but project forward of them, the bottom course of bricks of the pier is also stepped forward similarly to the projecting footing of the dwarf wall. The stepped footing of both the fire place and dwarf wall are at the same level and integral to each other.

In the centre of the south end of the wing was an almost circular, thin spread of chalk/lime no more than 1.4m in diameter. The spread overlay the clay and features associated with the earlier building 0043 and was truncated near its centre by posthole 0022, which was filled by a very similar deposit to 0016 (0014). The remains of this feature were vestigial and difficult to interpret but were possibly the remains of a mortar mixer set up for the construction of Old Thatches chimney and dwarf wall. Posthole

0020 which either cut by, or was respected, the chalk may have been part of the mixer's structure. Posthole 0020 was deeper than the other postholes in the area and contained a central post-pipe.



Plate 3. Part of the footing beneath the brick piers of the 17th century fireplace. The footing comprised a trench packed with yellow clay and large flints and would have been the only substantial piece below ground evidence that an early post-medieval building ever stood here at all.

6. The finds evidence

Sue Anderson

6.1 Introduction

Table 1 shows the quantities of finds collected during the monitoring. A full quantification by context is included as Appendix 3.

Find type	No.	Wt/g
Pottery	166	2293
CBM	2	61
Iron	1	6
Animal bone	16	344
Shell	2	27

Table 1. Finds quantities

6.2 Pottery

A total of 166 sherds (2293g) of pottery was collected from twelve contexts. Table 2 shows the quantification by fabric.

Description	Fabric	Code	No	Wt (g)	eve
Unidentified	UNID	0.001	5	160	0.12
Roman greyware	RBGW	1.10	1	26	
Early Saxon coarse quartz	ESCQ	2.03	1	3	
Early Saxon medium sandy	ESMS	2.22	1	10	
Early Saxon sparse chalk	ESSC	3.141	1	15	
<i>Total pre-medieval</i>			9	214	0.12
Early medieval ware	EMW	3.10	4	21	
Early medieval ware gritty	EMWG	3.11	1	6	
Early medieval sandwich wares	EMSW	3.16	2	21	
Early medieval ware sparse shelly	EMWSS	3.19	1	11	0.05
Medieval coarsewares	MCW	3.20	85	1459	0.83
Medieval coarseware gritty	MCWG	3.21	8	86	
Hedingham coarseware	HCW	3.43	1	8	
Hedingham coarseware (fine variant)	HCWF	3.431	24	163	0.05
Unprovenanced glazed	UPG	4.00	1	6	
Colchester Ware	COLC	4.21	3	20	0.04
Mill Green Ware	MGW	4.22	1	2	
Hedingham Ware	HFW1	4.23	2	7	
Ipswich Glazed Ware	IPSG	4.31	1	9	
<i>Total medieval</i>			134	1819	0.97
Late Essex-type wares	LMTE	5.60	9	159	
Late Colchester-type ware	COLL	5.61	3	32	0.06
Late Hedingham Ware	HFW2	5.62	4	6	
<i>Total late medieval</i>			16	197	0.06
Speckle-glazed Ware	SPEC	6.15	2	48	
Tin glazed earthenwares	TGE	6.30	3	2	0.06
Porcelain	PORC	8.30	2	13	0.03
<i>Total post-medieval</i>			7	63	0.09
Total			166	2293	1.24

Table 2. Pottery quantification by fabric

Methodology

Quantification was carried out using sherd count, weight and estimated vessel equivalent (eve). A full quantification by fabric, context and feature is available in the archive. All fabric codes were assigned from the author's post-Roman fabric series, which includes Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire and Midlands fabrics, as well as imported wares. Recording uses a system of letters for fabric codes together with number codes for ease of sorting in database format. The results were input directly onto an Access database which is kept with the digital archive files.

Pre-medieval pottery

Nine sherds pre-date the medieval period. One base sherd with a very slight footring is an abraded fragment of a Roman greyware vessel and was residual in ditch fill 0003.

Three handmade sherds in a variety of fabrics are probably Early Anglo-Saxon, although as they are body sherds and relatively undiagnostic it is possible that they could be prehistoric. These were also probably residual in ditch fills 0003 and 0037, and possibly pit fill 0039.

Five sherds from pit fill 0039 and related gully 0041 are currently unidentified. A burnished jar rim sherd in a fine black fabric with occasional fine red inclusions (possibly grog) may be either late Iron Age or Early Anglo-Saxon. With this were two flat-angled base sherds from a large vessel in a medium sandy fabric with occasional unburnt flint inclusions; again this could be prehistoric or Early Anglo-Saxon. A very thick, tapered upright rim from 0039 is in a soft grey fabric which appears overfired or burnt; it is uncertain whether the sherd is wheel or hand-formed. The small diameter of this vessel mitigates against it being a large Roman storage vessel, despite its similarity with some Roman forms. Another burnt sherd from this context is thick-walled and in a medium sandy black fabric, and is decorated with short, deeply impressed vertical corrugations. Similar corrugations are present on Saxon vessels from Markshall, Norfolk and Lackford, Suffolk (Myres.1977, fig. 227, nos. 3987 and 906). As a group, these sherds appear generally to be handmade and therefore of pre-medieval date, but their exact period is uncertain.

Medieval wares

Approximately 80% of this assemblage is medieval. The range of fabrics is similar to those previously identified at Priory Farm (Anderson 2010) and typical of the Essex–Suffolk border, varying from relatively coarse sandy (particularly the early medieval wares and MCWG) to very fine. Forms, where assessable, also fit best with the Essex medieval pottery typology originally developed by Cunningham (1985), with dates provided by Drury (1993).

Eight sherds belong to the earliest part of the medieval period, but all are associated with later pottery. Only one form was identifiable, a jar in shelly ware with a square-beaded rim which appears to be wheel-finished (0032).

Coarsewares dominate the high medieval assemblage. Fine micaceous types were recorded as Hedingham coarseware, but some of the grey medium sandy wares included in 'MCW' could also be from this production site. Identified forms comprise six jars, five bowls and two jugs. The jars are in Essex forms B4, H2 and H3, which Drury dates to the late 12th/13th, early-mid 13th and late 13th/mid 14th centuries respectively. Bowl forms are B4 and H1 types, the latter dated mid-late 13th-century. One jug rim is an inturned form, but the other jug is represented by a handle fragment only. Several of the bowls and a few jars are in a micaceous black-surfaced fabric with red margins, similar to early medieval sandwich ware but wheelmade. This fabric was also common amongst the bowls at Priory Farm and may be a local product.

Three sherds of a large vessel were found in slot fills 0015 and 0016. The fabric is grey with buff surfaces and common medium quartz sand and similar to Essex early medieval sandy wares in the 12th century (Cotter 2000, 39-40). This example appears to be a base, although if so the thickness of the base wall was inadequate and had broken off just beyond the luting. A thick band of applied thumbed strip located just above the angle would be an unusual feature if this were the base of a large jar, and it is possible that the vessel was in fact a barrel costrel (*cf* Cotter 2000, fig. 10, no. 19).

Only seven medieval glazed sherds were present (one COLC sherd was an unglazed jar rim), making up 5.5% of the high medieval group by count. This is comparable with other rural sites in the area, which generally produce a much smaller proportion of glazed wares in comparison with urban or high status sites. Most of the local production

sites were represented, including Sible Hedingham, Colchester and Mill Green (Ingatstone) in Essex, and Ipswich. One sherd is of uncertain provenance but may be a London product. The sherds are generally decorated with either green or orange glaze, a few over white slip.

Late medieval pottery

Late medieval wares are all typical of East Anglian redwares, some with white slip decoration and/or glaze. Some sherds could be assigned to Hedingham area and Colchester production sites, but most are in a fine red fabric of uncertain origin. This has been labelled 'LMTE' due to its similarity to the late Essex products from Colchester, but a south Suffolk origin is also possible. The sherds are generally undiagnostic, but there is one jug handle in LMTE and a lid-seated everted jar rim in late Colchester Ware (cf Cotter 2000, fig. 90 no. 115).

Post-medieval wares

Seven sherds of post-medieval were recovered, all from pit 0004. These are two sherds of speckle-glazed ware from two different vessels, three fragments of a small tin-glazed earthenware plate with blueish glaze and a hand-painted blue border, and two fragments of ?Chinese blue-painted porcelain. The group is probably 18th-century in date.

Pottery by feature

Table 3 shows the distribution of fabrics by feature, together with suggested spotdates.

Feature	Context	Identifier	Fabric	Spotdate
0002	0003	ditch fill	RBGW, ESMS, EMW, MCW, MCWG, HCWF, UPG, MGW, HFW2, COLL, LMTE	14th-15th c.?
0002	0028	ditch fill	MCW	M.13th-M.14th c.
0004	0004	pit	SPEC, TGE, PORC	18th c.
0014	0015	slot fill	MCW	12th c.?
0014	0016	slot fill	MCW	12th c.?
0030	0030	layer	MCW, MCWG, HCWF, COLC	L.13th c.
0032	0032	layer	EMSW, EMWSS, MCW, HCWF, HFW1, COLL, LMTE	15th-16th c.*
0034	0034	layer	EMSW, MCW, IPGS	13th-14th c.
0035	0036	ditch fill	EMW, EMWG, MCW, HCW, HCWF, HFW1, COLC, LMTE	14th-15th c.?
0035	0037	ditch fill	ESCQ, EMW, MCW, MCWG	12th-13th c.?
0038	0039	pit fill	ESSC, UNID	ESax?
0041	0041	gully	UNID	IA/ESax?

Table 3. Pottery by feature (* note that CBM may be later in this context)

The earliest feature on the site appears to be the pit and related gully 0038/0041, although it is possible that the sherds from this feature are residual. The primary fills of ditches 0002 and 0035 contained small quantities of medieval pottery, but they appear to have remained open until at least the late medieval period, with their upper fills containing 14th-15th-century pottery. The possible slot 0014 contained fragments of a single vessel which may, based on its fabric, date to the 12th century. The layers 0030, 0032 and 0034 generally contained medieval and later wares, 0032 being the most mixed. The latest dateable feature was pit 0004.

6.3 Ceramic Building Material (CBM)

Two fragments of CBM were collected. A fragment in a medium sandy flint-tempered fabric from ditchfill 0003 was a piece of plain roof tile; the reduced core suggests it is of medieval date. A fragment of hip tile in a fully oxidised medium sandy fabric from layer 0032 is probably post-medieval.

6.4 Metalwork

A corroded iron nail shaft was recovered from slot fill 0016.

7. Environmental evidence

7.1 Animal bone

Sixteen fragments of animal bone were found in six contexts. A deciduous premolar from an equid was found in ditchfill 0003. A medium mammal rib was collected from pitfill 0004. Context 0036 contained a fragment of pig tibia and the tip of a boar's tusk. Two teeth and a fragment of mandible from a sheep/goat were recovered from ditchfill 0037. Pitfill 0039 produced three small fragments of ?skull and a juvenile ?pig scapula. The largest group was found in gully 0041 and comprised fragments of cattle radius and ulna from a single individual, a small piece of ?cattle skull and an abraded long bone shaft, possibly a dog radius. The assemblage includes the major meat-producing animals but is too small for further conclusions.

7.2 Shell

Two complete oyster shells were collected from ditchfill 0003 and layer 0032.

7.3 Plant macrofossils and other remains

Val Fryer

Introduction and method statement

The excavations at Preston St Mary recorded a limited number of features. Whilst most of the associated artefacts were of medieval date, one gully contained three sherds of hand made pre-medieval pottery, possibly of Iron Age or Early Anglo-Saxon date.

Samples for the retrieval of the plant macrofossil assemblages were taken from buried topsoil layer 0031 (Sample 1) and from the gully fill (0041 – Sample 2).

The samples were processed by manual water flotation and the flots were collected in a 300 micron mesh sieve. The dried flots were scanned under a binocular microscope at magnifications up to x 16 and the plant macrofossils and other remains noted are listed in Table 4. Nomenclature within the table follows Stace (1997). With the exception of one mineral replaced seed, all plant remains were charred.

The non-floating residues were collected in a 1mm mesh sieve and sorted when dry. All artefacts/ecofacts were retained for further specialist analysis.

Sample No.	1	2
Context No.	0031	0041
Feature type	BTS	Gully
Cereals		
<i>Avena</i> sp. (grains)	xcf	
<i>Hordeum</i> sp. (grains)	xcf	
<i>Hordeum/Secale cereale</i> type (rachis node)	x	
<i>Secale cereale</i> L. (grain)	xcf	
<i>Triticum</i> sp. (grains)	xx	x
<i>T. aestivum/compactum</i> type (rachis nodes)	xx	
Cereal indet. (grains)	xx	x
Dry land herbs		
<i>Anthemis cotula</i> L.	xcapfg	
<i>Bromus</i> sp.	x	
<i>Centaurea</i> sp.	x	
Chenopodiaceae indet.	x	
Fabaceae indet.	x	x
<i>Rumex</i> sp.	x	
<i>Scandix pecten-veneris</i> L.	xcffg	
<i>Vicia/Lathyrus</i> sp.	x	
Tree/shrub macrofossils		
<i>Corylus avellana</i> L.		xcf
Other plant macrofossils		
Charcoal <2mm	xxxx	xxx
Charcoal >2mm	xxx	xx
Charcoal >5mm	x	x
Charred root/stem	x	x
Indet.culm nodes	x	
Indet.inflorescence frags.	x	
Indet.seeds	x xm	
Indet.thorns (<i>Prunus</i> type)	x	
Other remains		
Black porous 'cokey' material	xxx	x
Black tarry material	x	x
Bone		x
Burnt/fired clay	x	x
Marine mollusc shell	x	
Mortar/plaster	xcf	
Small coal frags.	x	
Small mammal/amphibian bones	x	
Vitreous material	xx	
Sample volume (litres)	16	14
Volume of flot (litres)	<0.1	<0.1
% flot sorted	100%	100%

Table 4. Plant macrofossils and other remains

Key to Table

x = 1 – 10 specimens xx = 11 – 50 specimens xxx = 51 – 100 specimens xxxx = 100+ specimens
 cf = compare capfg = capitula fragment m = mineral replaced BTS = buried top soil

Results

Cereal grains, chaff and seeds of common weeds were present at a low to moderate density within both assemblages. Preservation was generally quite poor; a high density of the grains were puffed and distorted, probably as a result of combustion at very high temperatures, and many of the seeds were fragmentary.

Wheat (*Triticum* sp.) grains were moderately common within the assemblage from Sample 1 along with bread wheat (*T. aestivum/compactum*) type rachis nodes. Possible grains of barley (*Hordeum* sp.), oats (*Avena* sp.) and rye (*Secale cereale*) were also noted, but their preservation was so poor that positive identifications could not be made. Seeds of common cornfield weeds including brome (*Bromus* sp.), cornflower (*Centaurea* sp.), small legumes (Fabaceae), dock (*Rumex* sp.) and vetch/vetchling (*Vicia/Lathyrus* sp.) were also recorded along with a stinking mayweed (*Anthemis cotula*) capitula (seed head) fragment. In comparison, the assemblage from Sample 2 was very sparse, containing only a small number of grains and seeds and a possible fragment of hazel (*Corylus avellana*) nutshell. Both assemblages contained moderate to high densities of charcoal/charred wood fragments. Other remains were relatively scarce, but did include fragments of black porous and tarry material (possible residues of the combustion of organic remains at very high temperatures), pieces of burnt or fired clay and globules of vitreous material. A small number of shells of terrestrial molluscs were also noted (not tabulated), but as all were very well preserved, with some retaining delicate surface structures, it was assumed that they were likely to be modern contaminants, which were intrusive within the features from which the samples were taken.

Conclusions

The interpretation of two assemblages in isolation is difficult, as it is impossible to place the material within the context of what may have been occurring on or near the site. However, the composition of the assemblage from buried topsoil layer 0031 appears to indicate that it is partly or wholly composed of either charred cereal processing/storage detritus or hearth waste, with the latter possibly being more likely as the remains have almost certainly been burnt at a high temperature, possibly on repeated occasions. It is possibly of note that many of the seeds present within this assemblage are of a similar size to the grains, and such contaminants would only have been removed from batches of cereal immediately prior to its consumption or use. There is insufficient material within

the gully assemblage (Sample 2) to allow an accurate interpretation of how the feature functioned or where the charred plant remains may have originated from.

As both assemblages are small, with neither containing a sufficient density of material for quantification (i.e. 100+ specimens), no further analysis is recommended. However, a summary of this assessment should be included within any publication of data from the site.

7.4 Discussion of the finds evidence

The largest proportion of this finds assemblage comprised pottery of medieval date. The pottery included diagnostic forms which spanned the entire medieval period and presumably related to the occupancy of the possible medieval structure. As with other sites in this part of Suffolk, much of the medieval pottery appears to have been sourced from across the border in Essex, or represents local Suffolk wares made in the Essex tradition, made at as yet unidentified production sites. This group, like other contemporary rural sites at Priory Farm and Cedar's Field, Stowmarket (Anderson 2004), produced a relatively high proportion of bowls in comparison to jugs, particularly in the 13th century. Bowls are often linked to dairying, although there is no reason to suppose that this would have been any more than domestic in scale.

The 18th-century pottery recovered from pit 0004 is the only material culture which can be associated with the occupation of the 17th-century house. The presence of tin-glazed ware and porcelain may indicate moderate to high status for the occupants, showing that they had access to fine tablewares produced outside the region, but otherwise provides little information on this phase of site use.

The small collection of other finds provides limited evidence for activity at this site, but includes a fragment of medieval roof tile and a post-medieval hip tile, offering potential clues to the appearance of the structures which once stood on the site. The nail from slot 0014 may also have been used in the medieval structure, although it would be unusual for a timber-framed structure to be built in this way and it is more likely to have had a different purpose. Animal bone and shell from the site represents all of the major domesticates and provides some evidence for food consumption at the site in the late

medieval period, although the largest group of bone was associated with the earliest feature.

8. Discussion

Old Thatches was positioned directly over an earlier medieval building and preserved considerable evidence of the previous occupation of the site.

The earliest evidence of occupation was a pit and associated gulley that produced 'hand-made' pottery of an uncertain date which exhibited traits which were arguably Iron Age or Early Anglo-Saxon in date. There is a known Iron Age presence in the area and the HER lists a background of Iron Age pottery and metal objects collected during field-walking and metal detecting of the nearby fields. No Early Anglo-Saxon finds are listed in the existing record and therefore on balance the activity on site is likely to be prehistoric too and the site's location on prominent high ground is characteristic of Iron Age settlements. A soil sample containing charcoal was taken, and has been retained, from the pottery's context; it has the potential to produce a radiocarbon date to resolve this uncertainty.

Evidence of the next phase of activity dates to the after the Norman Conquest and a moderately sized component of the pottery assemblage dates to around the 11th-12th century. Whilst no features could be attributed to this date it strongly suggests occupation in the immediate vicinity; the manor of Preston is in existence (held by Wulfwaerd, a free man under Stigand) before the Conquest and the church at Preston has a magnificent early 12th century font.

The earliest cut features dated from around the 12th-13th century and included structural features indicative of a probable house site as well as its former plot boundary. The boundary ditch was still open in the 14th century but was infilled before the 16th century to allow part of Old Thatches to be constructed over it. The plot boundary was re-established further to the west and remained there until the 19th century as shown on the tithe map. The details of the 12th-13th century building were scant, box-framed medieval buildings constructed on sill beams leave almost no recognisable trace in the ground, and only the approximate footprint was discernable; the interior space was distinct from the exterior, but no 'ground plan' survived. The

building was probably a domestic dwelling with a yard to the rear (north); the yard included an external domestic oven, in which burnt grain was found, that would have been used for either baking bread or producing malt for beer, for the household's consumption.

The construction of Old Thatches itself began in the 16th century with the building of the west wing in which several timbers possibly from its predecessor were re-used. Built on a sill beam which lay on the ground surface it was unidentifiable in the archaeological record, apart from a small patch of burning where a previous hearth may have been, and there was no evidence of the contemporary hall range speculated on in the building report (Alston 2007). When the east wing was constructed in the 17th century constructional techniques had developed and sill beams raised-up on shallow brick walls and brick-built chimneys were the norm. But whilst the chimney at Old Thatches had a below ground footing, deeper than the topsoil level, the dwarf walls did not and in the course of a normal archaeological site strip evidence of these would have been lost.

Similar flint chimney footings in apparent isolation of any other building evidence have been found at Mildenhall (MNL 536) and Bury St Edmunds (BSE 131) and at Redgrave (RGV045) where a small area of burnt sand, where once stood a full brick chimney, was the only record in the ground of 17th century timber-framed house immediately after its demolition.

9. Conclusions

In conclusion, the excavation beneath Old Thatches is a further illustration of why very few rural medieval house sites are discovered by archaeological excavation. Other than the chimney, the 16th and 17th century elements of the building left no impression in the ground and virtually no finds dating from the 400 year occupation of Old Thatches were recovered from the site.

The pottery produced by the pre-medieval features is of intrinsic interest as it shows characteristics of both early Anglo-Saxon and Iron Age pottery. Its age may potentially be resolved by radiocarbon dating associated soil samples which would benefit greatly local pottery studies and if Early Anglo-Saxon the pottery would be first evidence of the period recovered from the vicinity.

10. Archive deposition

Paper archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds

Digital archive: SCCAS R:\Environmental Protection\Conservation\Archaeology\Archive\
Preston St Mary\PSM 031 Excavation

Digital photographic archive: SCCAS R:\Environmental Protection\Conservation\
Archaeology\Catalogues\Photos\HOA-HOZ\HOZ 43-71

Finds and environmental archive: **1 / 92 / 3.**

11. Acknowledgements

All aspects of excavation and site management were carried out by David Gill and the report was written by Mo Muldowney and David Gill (all from Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team).

Finds processing was carried out by Gemma Adams and the specialist finds report produced by Sue Anderson. Other specialist identification and advice was provided by Val Fryer. The report was edited by Richenda Goffin.

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Appendix 1. Brief and specification

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE - CONSERVATION TEAM

Brief and Specification for an Archaeological Excavation and Monitoring

DEMOLITION OF THE OLD THATCHES, ROOKWOOD LANE, PRESTON ST MARY, SUDBURY, CO10 9LY

Although this document is fundamental to the work of the specialist archaeological contractor the developer should be aware that certain of its requirements are likely to impinge upon the working practices of a general building contractor and may have financial implications

1. The nature of the development and archaeological requirements

- 1.1 Planning permission for the demolition of The Old Thatches, Rookwood Lane, Preston St Mary, Sudbury, CO10 9LY (TL 9410 51334) has been applied for conditional upon an acceptable programme of archaeological work being carried out (application B/06/00745). The local planning authority (Babergh District Council) has been advised that the building is significant and a comprehensive programme of historic building recording must be undertaken before demolition and redevelopment in accordance with the principles set out in *Planning Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment* (DoE/DNH 1994) and *Planning Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning* (DoE 1990).
- 1.2 The proposal concerns The Old Thatches, a Grade II Listed Building of special architectural and historic interest that dates from the sixteenth century (Listed Building 277074). The building was devastated by fire in February 2006.
- 1.3 A Brief and Specification for building recording work was issued by the Archaeological Service in 2007. This work was carried out by Leigh Alston (report forthcoming). This indicates that the earliest parts of the house dated from the 16th century, with later additions and alterations. The remains have now been demolished and this Brief and Specification is for the investigation the below-ground archaeological deposits relating to the house site that will be affected by the development.
- 1.4 In order to comply with the planning condition, the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of SCC (SCCAS/CT) has been requested to provide a brief and specification for the archaeological recording of archaeological deposits that will be affected by development. An outline specification, which defines certain minimum criteria, is set out below.

2. Brief for Archaeological Excavation

- 2.1 An archaeological excavation, as specified in Section 3, is to be carried out prior to redevelopment, across the area of the demolished building, measuring c. 150m² in area. The area of the demolished house is to be excavated, as agreed on site at a meeting with SCCAS/CT (04/09/07).
- 2.2 The excavation objective will be to provide a record of all archaeological deposits which would otherwise be damaged or removed by development, including services and landscaping permitted by the consent. Adequate time is to be allowed for archaeological recording of archaeological deposits during excavation.
- 2.3 The academic objective will centre upon the high potential for this site to produce evidence for the earlier history of the house site.

- 2.4 This project will be carried through in a manner broadly consistent with English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects*, 1991 (MAP2). Excavation is to be followed by the preparation of a full archive, and an assessment of potential for analysis and publication. Analysis and final report preparation will follow assessment and will be the subject of a further brief and updated project design.
- 2.5 In accordance with the standards and guidance produced by the Institute of Field Archaeologists this brief should not be considered sufficient to enable the total execution of the project. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) based upon this brief and the accompanying outline specification of minimum requirements, is an essential requirement. This must be submitted by the developers, or their agent, to SCCAS/CT (Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds IP33 2AR; telephone/fax: 01284 352443) for approval. The work must not commence until this office has approved both the archaeological contractor as suitable to undertake the work, and the WSI as satisfactory. The PD/WSI will *provide the basis for measurable standards* and will be used to establish whether the requirements of the planning condition will be adequately met; an important aspect of the WSI will be an assessment of the project in relation to the Regional Research Framework (*East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers* 3, 1997, 'Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties, 1. resource assessment', and 8, 2000, 'Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. research agenda and strategy').
- 2.6 There is a presumption that all archaeological work specified for the whole area will be undertaken by the same body, whether the fieldwork takes place in phases or not. There is similarly a presumption that further analysis and post-excavation work to final report stage will be carried through by the excavating body. Any variation from this principle would require a justification which would show benefit to the archaeological process.
- 2.6 Before any archaeological site work can commence it is the responsibility of the developer to provide the archaeological contractor with either the contaminated land report for the site or a written statement that there is no contamination. The developer should be aware that investigative sampling to test for contamination is likely to have an impact on any archaeological deposit which exists; proposals for sampling should be discussed with SCCAS/CT before execution.
- 2.7 The responsibility for identifying any restraints on field-work (e.g. Scheduled Monument status, Listed Building status, public utilities or other services, tree preservation orders, SSSIs, wildlife sites &c.) rests with the commissioning body and its archaeological contractor. The existence and content of the archaeological brief does not over-ride such restraints or imply that the target area is freely available.
- 2.8 All arrangements for the excavation of the site, the timing of the work, access to the site, the definition of the precise area of landholding and area for proposed development are to be defined and negotiated with the commissioning body.
- 2.9 The developer or his archaeologist will give SCCAS/CT ten working days notice of the commencement of ground works on the site, in order that the work of the archaeological contractor may be monitored. The method and form of development will also be monitored to ensure that it conforms to previously agreed locations and techniques upon which this brief is based.

3. Specification for the Archaeological Excavation

The excavation methodology is to be agreed in detail before the project commences, certain minimum criteria will be required:

- 3.1 If the machine stripping is to be undertaken by the main contractor, all machinery must keep off the stripped areas until they have been fully excavated and recorded, in accordance with this specification. Full construction work must not begin until excavation has been completed and formally confirmed by SCCAS/CT.
- 3.2 Modern deposits may be cleared by machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, but must then be cleaned off by hand. All machine excavation is to be under the direct control and supervision of an archaeologist. There is a presumption that excavation of all archaeological deposits will be done by hand unless it can be shown there will not be a loss of evidence by using a machine. The decision as to the proper method of further excavation will be made by the senior project archaeologist with regard to the nature of the deposit.
- 3.3 All features which are, or could be interpreted as, structural must be fully excavated. Post-holes and pits must be examined in section and then fully excavated. Fabricated surfaces within the excavation area (e.g. prepared floors) must be fully exposed and cleaned. Any variation from this process can only be made by agreement with SCCAS/CT, and must be confirmed in writing.
- 3.4 All other features must be sufficiently examined to establish, where possible, their date and function. For guidance:
 - a) A minimum of 50% of the fills of the general features is to be excavated.
 - b) Between 10% and 20% of the fills of substantial linear features (ditches, etc) are to be excavated, the samples must be representative of the available length of the feature and must take into account any variations in the shape or fill of the feature and any concentrations of artefacts.
- 3.5 Any variation from this process can only be made by agreement [if necessary on site] with a member of SCCAS/CT, and must be confirmed in writing.
- 3.6 Collect and prepare environmental bulk samples (for flotation and analysis by an environmental specialist). The fills of all archaeological features should be bulk sampled for palaeoenvironmental remains and assessed by an appropriate specialist. The Project Design must provide details of a comprehensive sampling strategy for retrieving and processing biological remains (for palaeoenvironmental and palaeoeconomic investigations and also for absolute dating), and samples of sediments and/or soils (for micromorphological and other pedological/sedimentological analyses. All samples should be retained until their potential has been assessed. Advice on the appropriateness of the proposed strategies will be sought from J. Heathcote, English Heritage Regional Adviser in Archaeological Science (East of England). A guide to sampling archaeological deposits (Murphy, P.L. and Wiltshire, P.E.J., 1994, *A guide to sampling archaeological deposits for environmental analysis*) is available for viewing from SCCAS.
- 3.7 A finds recovery policy is to be agreed before the project commences. It should be addressed by the WSI. Sieving of occupation levels and building fills will be expected.
- 3.8 Use of a metal detector will form an essential part of finds recovery. Metal detector searches must take place at all stages of the excavation by an experienced metal detector user.
- 3.9 All finds will be collected and processed. No discard policy will be considered until the whole body of finds has been evaluated.
- 3.10 All ceramic, bone and stone artefacts to be cleaned and processed concurrently with the excavation to allow immediate evaluation and input into decision making.

- 3.11 Metal artefacts must be stored and managed on site in accordance with *UK Institute of Conservators Guidelines* and evaluated for significant dating and cultural implications before despatch to a conservation laboratory within four weeks of excavation.
- 3.12 Human remains are to be treated at all stages with care and respect, and are to be dealt with in accordance with the law. They must be recorded *in situ* and subsequently lifted, packed and marked to standards compatible with those described in the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Technical Paper 13: Excavation and post-excavation treatment of Cremated and Inhumed Human Remains*, by McKinley & Roberts. Proposals for the final disposition of remains following study and analysis will be required in the Project Design.
- 3.13 Plans of the archaeological features on the site should normally be drawn at 1:20 or 1:50, depending on the complexity of the data to be recorded. Sections should be drawn at 1:10 or 1:20 again depending on the complexity to be recorded. All levels should relate to Ordnance Datum. Any variations from this must be agreed with SCCAS/CT.
- 3.14 A photographic record of the work is to be made, consisting of both monochrome photographs and colour transparencies/high resolution digital images.
- 3.15 Excavation record keeping is to be consistent with the requirements of the County Sites and Monuments Record and compatible with its archive. Methods must be agreed with SCCAS/CT.

4. **Brief for Archaeological Monitoring**

- 4.1 In addition to the full excavation of the footprint of the demolished building, archaeological monitoring is required for all other ground disturbance, including the excavation of the footing trenches for the northern wing of the new dwelling and the new cartlodge and for the excavation of associated service trenches. These, and the upcast soil, are to be closely monitored during and after they have been excavated by the building contractor. Adequate time is to be allowed for archaeological recording of archaeological deposits during excavation, and of soil sections following excavation.
- 4.1 The monitoring will provide a record of archaeological deposits which are not to be archaeologically excavated prior to development but which will be damaged or removed by any development [including services and landscaping] permitted by the current planning consent.
- 4.2 To carry out the monitoring work the developer will appoint an archaeologist (the observing archaeologist) who must be approved by SCCAS/CT.
- 4.3 The developer or his archaeologist will give SCCAS/CT 48-hours notice of the commencement of site works.
- 4.4 A contingency allowance must be made to cover archaeological costs incurred in monitoring the development works. The size of the contingency should be estimated by the approved archaeological contractor, on the basis of the work specified below and the contractor's timetable and working practices.
- 4.5 The developer shall afford access at all reasonable times to both SCCAS/CT and an archaeological contractor to allow archaeological observation of building and engineering operations which disturb the ground.
- 4.6 Opportunity must be given to the archaeological contractor to hand excavate any discrete archaeological features, which appear during earth moving operations, retrieve finds and make measured records as necessary.

- 4.7 The archaeological contractor will not be entitled to enforce specific delays and hold ups to the work of the contractor other than those previously agreed and set out in the WSI. If delays prove desirable to the archaeological recording process they should be arranged by mutual agreement with the contractor; the developer's architect may be approached as an arbitrator.
- 4.8 All archaeological features must be planned at a minimum scale of 1:50 on a plan showing the proposed layout of the development.
- 4.9 All contexts must be numbered and finds recorded by context.
- 4.10 The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County Sites and Monument Record.

5. General Management

- 5.1 A timetable for all stages of the project must be agreed before the first stage of work commences.
- 5.2 Monitoring of the archaeological work will be undertaken by SCCAS/CT. A decision on the monitoring required will be made by SCCAS/CT on submission of the accepted WSI.
- 5.3 The composition of the project staff must be detailed and agreed (this is to include any subcontractors). For the site director and other staff likely to have a major responsibility for the post-excavation processing of this site there must be a statement of their responsibilities for post-excavation work on other archaeological sites.
- 5.4 It is the archaeological contractor's responsibility to ensure that adequate resources are available to fulfill the Brief.
- 5.5 A detailed risk assessment and management strategy for this particular site.
- 5.6 The WSI must include proposed security measures to protect the site and both excavated and unexcavated finds from vandalism and theft.
- 5.7 Provision for the reinstatement of the ground and filling of dangerous holes must be detailed in the WSI.
- 5.8 No initial survey to detect public utility or other services has taken place. The responsibility for this rests with the archaeological contractor.
- 5.9 The Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessments* and for *Field Evaluations* should be used for additional guidance in the execution of the project and in drawing up the report.

6. Archive Requirements

- 6.1 Within four weeks of the end of field-work a timetable for post-excavation work must be produced. Following this a written statement of progress on post-excavation work whether archive, assessment, analysis or final report writing will be required at three monthly intervals.
- 6.2 An archive of all records and finds is to be prepared consistent with the principle of English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects*, 1991 (MAP2), particularly Appendix 3. However, the detail of the archive is to be fuller than that implied in MAP2 Appendix 3.2.1. The archive is to be sufficiently detailed to allow comprehension and further interpretation of the site should the project not proceed to detailed analysis and

final report preparation. It must be adequate to perform the function of a final archive for lodgement in the County SMR or museum.

- 6.3 The project manager must consult the SMR Officer to obtain a n event number for the work. This number will be unique for each project or site and must be clearly marked on any documentation relating to the work.
- 6.4 The project manager should consult the County SMR officer regarding the requirements for the deposition of the archive (conservation, ordering, organisation, labelling, marking and storage) of excavated material and the archive.
- 6.5 A clear statement of the form, intended content, and standards of the archive is to be submitted for approval as an essential requirement of the WSI.
- 6.6 The site archive quoted at MAP2 Appendix 3, must satisfy the standard set by the "Guideline for the preparation of site archives and assessments of all finds other than fired clay vessels" of the Roman Finds Group and the Finds Research Group AD700-1700 (1993).
- 6.7 Pottery should be recorded and archived to a standard comparable with 6.6 above, i.e. *The Study of Later Prehistoric Pottery: General Policies and Guidelines for Analysis and Publication*, Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group Occ Paper 1 (1991, rev 1997), the *Guidelines for the archiving of Roman Pottery*, Study Group Roman Pottery (ed M G Darling 1994) and the *Guidelines of the Medieval Pottery Group* (in draft).
- 6.8 All coins must be identified and listed as a minimum archive requirement.
- 6.9 The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County Sites and Monuments Record. All record drawings of excavated evidence are to be presented in drawn up form, with overall site plans. All records must be on an archivally stable and suitable base.
- 6.10 A complete copy of the site record archive must be deposited with the County Sites and Monuments Record within 12 months of the completion of fieldwork. It will then become publicly accessible.
- 6.11 Finds must be appropriately conserved and stored in accordance with UK Institute Conservators Guidelines.
- 6.12 Every effort must be made to get the agreement of the landowner/developer to the deposition of the finds with the County SMR or a museum in Suffolk which satisfies Museum and Galleries Commission requirements, as an indissoluble part of the full site archive. If this is not achievable for all or parts of the finds archive then provision must be made for additional recording (e.g. photography, illustration, analysis) as appropriate. If the County SMR is the repository for finds there will be a charge made for storage, and it is presumed that this will also be true for storage of the archive in a museum.
- 6.13 Where positive conclusions are drawn from a project, a summary report in the established format, suitable for inclusion in the annual 'Archaeology in Suffolk' section of the Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute for Archaeology journal, must be prepared and included in the project report, or submitted to SCCAS/CT by the end of the calendar year in which the evaluation work takes place, whichever is the sooner.
- 6.14 Where appropriate, a digital vector trench plan should be included with the report, which must be compatible with MapInfo GIS software, for integration in the County Sites and Monuments Record. AutoCAD files should be also exported and saved into a format that can be imported into MapInfo (for example, as a Drawing Interchange File or .dxf) or already transferred to .TAB files.

- 6.15 At the start of work (immediately before fieldwork commences) an OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> must be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms.
- 6.16 All parts of the OASIS online form must be completed for submission to the SMR. This should include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy should also be included with the archive).

7. Report Requirements

- 7.1 An assessment report on the fieldwork and archive must be provided consistent with the principle of *MAP2*, particularly Appendix 4. The report must be integrated with the archive.
- 7.2 The objective account of the archaeological evidence must be clearly distinguished from its archaeological interpretation.
- 7.3 An important element of the report will be a description of the methodology.
- 7.4 Reports on specific areas of specialist study must include sufficient detail to permit assessment of potential for analysis, including tabulation of data by context, and must include non-technical summaries.
- 7.5 Provision should be made to assess the potential of scientific dating techniques for establishing the date range of significant artefact or ecofact assemblages, features or structures.
- 7.6 The results should be related to the relevant known archaeological information held in the county SMR.
- 7.7 The report will give an opinion as to the potential and necessity for further analysis of the excavation data beyond the archive stage, and the suggested requirement for publication; it will refer to the Regional Research Framework (see above, 2.5). Further analysis will not be embarked upon until the primary fieldwork results are assessed and the need for further work is established. Analysis and publication can be neither developed in detail nor costed in detail until this brief and specification is satisfied, however, the developer should be aware that there may be a responsibility to provide a publication of the results of the programme of work.
- 7.8 The assessment report must be presented within six months of the completion of fieldwork unless other arrangements are negotiated with the project sponsor and SCCAS/CT.
- 7.9 The involvement of SCCAS/CT should be acknowledged in any report or publication generated by this project.

Specification by: Jess Tipper

Suffolk County Council
Archaeological Service Conservation Team
Environment and Transport Department
Shire Hall
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk IP33 2AR

Tel: 01284 352197

Date: 4 September 2007

Reference: / TheOldThatchesPrestonStMary2007

This brief and specification remains valid for 12 months from the above date. If work is not carried out in full within that time this document will lapse; the authority should be notified and a revised brief and specification may be issued.

If the work defined by this brief forms a part of a programme of archaeological work required by a Planning Condition, the results must be considered by the Conservation Team of the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council, who have the responsibility for advising the appropriate Planning Authority.

Appendix 2. Context list

context	feature	identifier	description
0001			Unstratified finds
0002		ditch	N-S ditch running beneath the C17th chimney in the west range.
0003	0002	ditch fill	Upper fill of 0002 green brown silty clay flecked with charcoal and chalk. 0003 appears as a possible separate cut butt ending within the footprint of the C17th house.
0004		pit	Broad shallow depression against the inside and possibly cut by the north wall of the building 0013. Filled with a single layer of loosely packed chalky clay (redeposited natural)
0005	0013	footing	Footing trench and fill, for the north wall of the west range of the C17th building. Excavated close to a later disturbance and possibly contaminated, filled with a black sooty silt. Plaster finds possibly recent.
0006		posthole	Shallow square post hole, possibly paired with similarly fill posthole 0008 cuts dark loam layer 0010
0007		fill	Fill of posthole 0006, densely packed yellow clay
0008		posthole	Square, clay packed, post hole with possible central postpipe. Possibly paired with similarly fill posthole 0006 cuts dark loam layer 0010
0009		fill	Fill of posthole 0008, densely packed yellow clay around central post pipe
0010		layer	Spread of dark clay silt, loam, completely reworked soil leached with charcoal, burnt clay and chalk. Extensive soil horizon covering most of the eastern half of the site. Occupation/ buried topsoil layer cut by or overlaid by all other features. 8cms deep lies directly over the subsoil.
0011		layer	Discrete area of burnt clay with associated flecks of charcoal, possible hearth severely truncated, directly onto subsoil.
0012	0014	layer	spread of yellow clay similar to that filling posthole 0006 and 0008, suggesting possible association. Below partition wall separating west and east ranges of the C17th building. Clay compacted, 6-8cms deep, mixed with chalk - looks like decayed clay lump. Later shown to be part of 0014
0013		wall	North wall of the E-W range of the C17th century building. Survives to 3-4 brick courses high, laid in Flemish bond (sample taken). White chalky lime mortar well mixed with a medium grit sand. Wall laid in a shallow step cut into the subsoil with the soil level inside the building higher than outside. Inside face of the wall rough finished outside well executed and neatly pointed.
0014	0014	slot	Linear cut, flat bottomed. Possible structural feature filled with loosely packed yellow clay with chalk - decayed clay lump? Some burnt clay. Bottom of the slot soil very compacted. Continuation of 0011 Cuts dark feature
0015	0014	fill	Fill of 0014, where sectioned loosely packed chalky clay some burnt clay and charcoal flecking.

context	feature	identifier	description
0016	0014	fill	Fill of 0014, fine compacted dark brown silt, sealed beneath 0015 at the south end and corner of 0014
0017	0014	fill	Fill of 0014, compacted linear spread of clay below 0016 and following the west edge of 0014.
0018	0014	section	Section through south end of 0014 through layers 00016 and 00017
0019	0014	posthole	Small posthole sealed by 0016 adjacent to 0017 within 0014. Filled with with loose yellow clay similar to 0015.
0020		posthole	Deep posthole packed with dense yellow clay possible central post position. Either cut by or respected by chalk spread 0021.
0021		spread	Thin spread of chalk, adjacent to and possibly associated with 0014. Overlies 0014
0022		posthole	Fine muddy silt similar to 0016 lying within discreet small circular depression 002. Very shallow possible post position.
0023		posthole	Small square posthole, 20cm x 8cm deep. Packed with yellow clay.
0024		posthole	Shallow posthole just inside southwall of the C17th century building. Filled with yellow clay
0025		posthole	Shallow posthole just inside southwall of the C17th century building. Filled with yellow clay
0026		layer	Dark silt clay/ loam extends over the whole of the area of the south room of the east range. Reworked occupation soil or topsoil, flecked with charcoal burnt clay and chalk - no finds. All features overlay or cut this deposit. 10-15cms deep buried topsoil?
0027		footing	Footing for the C17th fireplace - substantial footing. Trench packed with large, closely spaced flints set in yellow clay, unburnt. Extent of the footing follows shape of the piers but projects forward of the face of the pier. The bottom course of bricks also stepped forward suggesting that this is also part of the footing. This brick course is level with the step in the wall footing, wall and pier footing integrated. Current hearth re-built but at the correct level ie brick course 2
0028	0002	fill	Lower fill of ditch 0002 seen in section in the south footing trench of the new build. Pale orange/brown silty clay almost indistinguishable from the natural clay.
0029		layer	Floor layer, compacted spread of green clay - redeposited natural clay. Immediately below the bedding sand for existing floor. Clay part of the original C17th building and similar to and part of the material filling the footing trench.
0030		layer	Surface of flint cobbling, discreet area of closely packed medium to large cobbles, planned as a 1x1.5m sub-rectangle and this is probably close to the true extent. Sealed below 0029 - finds collected under this number from a fine silt mud off the surface of the flints distinct from 0029. Flints set into buried topsoil layer 0031 - similar to 0026.
0031		layer	Buried topsoil layer, well worked dark silty loam flecked with charcoal sand burnt clay. Soil sample taken <1>

context	feature	identifier	description
0032		layer	Finds collected from the surface of 0031 - probably the same stratigraphic layer as 0030 but not off the surface of the flints. NB 0032 possibly the top of ditch 0035 (same layer as 0036) ditch not identified when this number was issued.
0033		hearth/oven	Small, very regular and rectangular spread of burnt clay 45x80cms, 2cm thick. Intensively but completely evenly burnt, thin spread of ash and unburnt clay around the edges of burnt area and surrounding soil layers discoloured by the heat. Surface of the missing not hard fired. Probable oven base adjacent to and probably associated with flint surface 0030.
0034		layer	finds from surface of 0031 below directly 0033
0035		ditch	Deep steep sided ditch, running e-w across the north side of the house plot. Truncated by modern disturbance on north and west sides. Butt end and filled with two fills, 0036 and 0037. Not identified until ground reduction (the removal of 0031) but the pattern of the flints suggest that it may cut 0031 and 0030
0036	0035	fill	Ditch fill, top fill of 0035 dark brown fine silt/clay - occupation debris, flecked with charcoal and chalk. finds rich possibly the same layer as 0032
0037	0035	fill	lower and main fill of ditch 0035. Dark silt clay similar to 0036 but separated by a thin layer of muddy yellow clay fewer finds than 0037. Both ditch layers relatively little bone.
0038		pit	Shallow broad pit filled with brown fine silt with iron staining. A thin single layer of small stones and flints lining base of the pit. Narrow gully 0041 extends from and is part of the pit.
0039		fill	fill of 0038 fine brown silt with iron staining
0040		posthole	small clay packed posthole under footing (0042) of C17th building
0041		gully	narrow gully extending from the east side of pit 0038 and part of this feature. Level of the base of the gully drops from the pit suggesting that the gully is taking liquid away from the pit. Extent of the gully is unknown truncated. Under flint cobbles 0030 Soil sample <SS2> taken
0042		footing	Footing part of the west range of the 17th building, brick size larger than the east range. Footing terraced into the side of the slope of the so that the ground level inside is higher than out.

Appendix 3. Bulk finds quantification by context

OP No	Pottery No	Pottery Wt	CBM No	CBM W	Iron No	Iron Wt	Animal bone No	Animal bone Wt	Oyster No	Oyster Wt	Spotdate
0003	52	0.422	1	0.027			1	0.027	1	0.016	14-15th c?
0004	7	0.063					1	0.004			18th c
0015	1	0.008									12th c?
0016	2	0.392			1	0.006					12th c?
0028	10	0.392									M.13-M.14th c.
0030	19	0.087									L.13th c.
0032	30	0.319	1	0.034					1	0.011	15th-16th c.+
0034	6	0.128									13-14th c.
0036	26	0.255					2	0.025			14th-15th c.?
0037	7	0.052					3	0.013			12th-13th c.?
0039	3	0.082					4	0.023			ESax??
0041	3	0.093					5	0.252			IA/ESax?

**Old Thatches,
Preston St Mary,
Suffolk**

PSM 036

Archaeological Record



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September 2007

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Old Thatches, Rookwood Lane, Preston St Mary, Suffolk

(TL 9410 5133)

An Archaeological Record

This report provides a written and photographic record at English Heritage (2006) Level 3 of a grade II listed building that was damaged by fire in February 2006. It has been prepared to a brief designed by the Archaeological Service of Suffolk County Council (Dr Jess Tipper, 24 July 2007) and is intended to fulfil a condition of planning permission for demolition (Babergh District Council application B/06/00745).

Introduction

The following written report is accompanied by a CD containing a full photographic record in the form of 8.2 megapixel digital images (Appendix 1) but also includes monochrome prints of key features (Appendix 2). Each image is separately described in the written report, and the CD also includes the report in MS Word format. The building was surveyed before and during demolition over a period of two weeks commencing on August 8th 2007, when the accompanying photographs were taken (wherever practical a white metre rod with centimetre subdivisions has been included for scale purposes).

Summary

Old Thatches lies on the northern edge of Rookwood Lane in open arable countryside and on the crest of a hill which overlooks the valley of the River Brett. The building had been derelict since

its roof and sections of its roof-plate were destroyed in February 2006 by a thatch fire caused by the inadequate flue of a wood-burning stove. It is understood that the previous roof, of which no trace

remained, had been replaced in softwood following a similar thatch fire during the early 1980s. Despite these fires the original timber-framed walls and ceilings of the listed property remained largely intact and were fully recorded and drawn during the present survey.

The historic building was found to consist of two separate structures which adjoined each other at right-angles to form an L-shaped house, although its north-western corner had been filled by an extension of the 1980s. The eastern wing was aligned approximately north-south and extended to 10.5 metres in length by 4.9 in width; it contained two ground-floor rooms separated by an apparently original brick chimney which heated only the larger room to the south. This larger room originally possessed a pair of opposing external doors which flanked the fireplace, while the smaller room was reached only from within. The western wing extended to 6.9 metres in length by an unusually narrow 3.8 metres in width and appears to have contained a single room entered by an external door adjacent to that of the eastern wing. A small window with a single 'diamond' mullion remained intact in its northern elevation. Both wings rose to approximately 3 metres at their eaves, with low upper storeys contained partly in their roofs, but differed in construction and date. The framing of the narrow eastern wing reflected the 16th century tradition, with heavy-sectioned studs divided by mid-rails and infilled with wattle-and-daub secured by horizontal staves set between the studs; the oak studs of the front, southern elevation were initially exposed externally, although those of the rear wall were rendered and consisted chiefly of elm. The studs of the western wing, in contrast, were smaller in section and not interrupted by mid-rails; their wattle-and-daub was secured by horizontal coppice poles that were

trenched and nailed to their external surfaces in the manner of the 17th century, although the studs of the southern gable, which had been replaced in the 1980s, may well have been exposed to match the western wing. The ceiling joists, which bear distinctive 'lamb's tongue' chamfer stops in the 17th century fashion, were supported on pegged clamps.

The two wings can be interpreted as a single domestic house of the early-17th century which consisted of a 'new' hall with a contemporary parlour to the north and a service or dairy range to the west that had been retained from the earlier house on the site. Many individual timbers in the eastern wing had been re-used from an older structure. The layout of the 17th century house, with an apparent cross-passage passing immediately in front of the hall fireplace, was highly unusual and of great historic interest. It illustrates a rare transitional form in the development of the English house between the standard cross-passage form of the 16th century and the lobby entrance of the 17th, and was one of only four or five known examples in East Anglia.

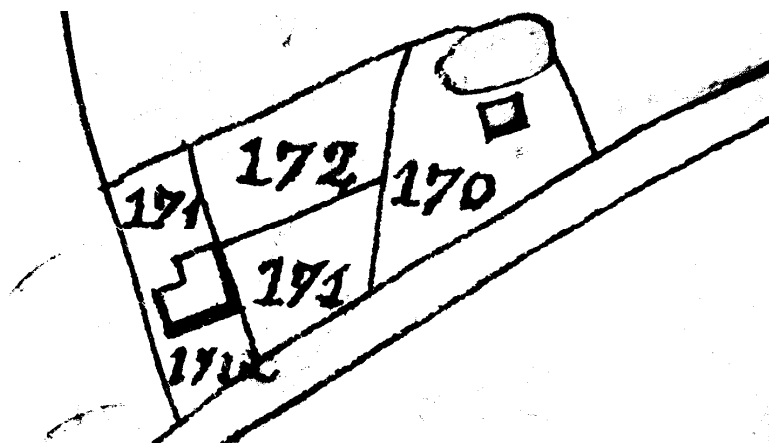
The house was subsequently divided into three small cottages as shown on the Ordnance Survey of 1904, and contained two secondary chimneys in addition to its 17th century original (the latter altered by the insertion of a bread oven in the 19th century). This sub-division was corroborated by evidence of at least four secondary external doors, all of which had been blocked during the 20th century. The Ordnance Survey and the Preston title map of 1838 show two further detached cottages in the present garden to the east of the house, but no trace of these survives above ground.

Historic Context of Site

Old Thatches occupies a site in open arable countryside on the northern edge of the parish of Preston St Mary, within 300 metres of its boundary with Thorpe Morieux and 1.3 kilometres north-west of the church of St Mary. It lies on the upper slope of a hill spur overlooking the valley of the River Brett and adjoins the northern edge of a minor lane known as Rookwood Lane which leads eastwards from Mortimer's Farm towards Jordan's Farm and Rooksey Green. These local place names combine with the site's commanding position in the landscape to suggest a medieval origin: Sir William de Mortimer held the manor house that still bears his name on his death in 1297, and his descendants sold it to Robert Rookwood in 1565 (Rooksey Green was still known as Rookwood Green in the 19th century). Between 1805 and 1811 the manor passed from the Rookwoods to the Makin family, which owned much of the surrounding land and the property now known as Old Thatches at the time of the tithe survey in 1838 (Henry Copinger's *Manors of Suffolk*, 1904). Although no relevant pre-19th century documentation has been traced, it seems likely that its site formed part of the medieval manor.



Plan of Site as Existing (from 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey), showing Old Thatches to the north of Rookwood Lane between Jordan's Farm and Mortimer's Farm. The boundary with Thorpe Morieux is shown top left and the River Brett top right.

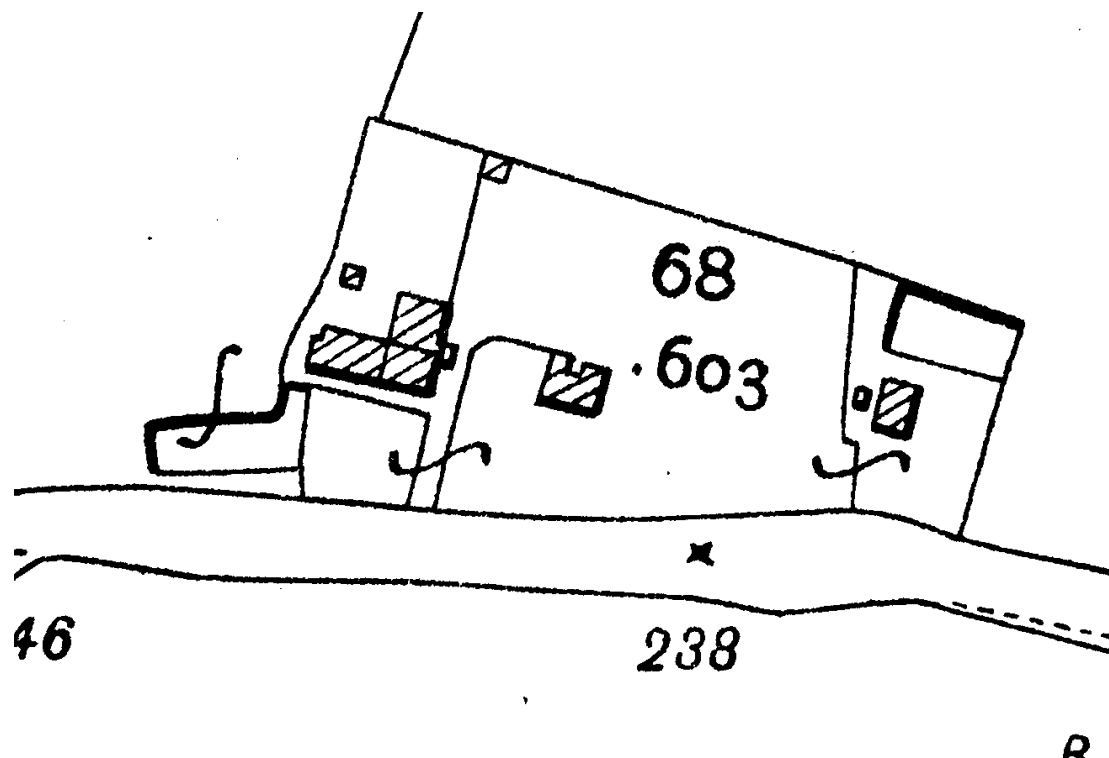


Old Thatches as depicted on the Preston St Mary tithe map of 1838 (SRO), with the house to the left and a further cottage with an oval pond to right. The pond remains.

The tithe map of 1838 shows the L-shaped profile of the house prior to its extension in the 1980s, but includes the western half of the present garden in the adjacent Barn Field belonging to Jordan's Farm, and shows an additional cottage adjacent to the dry pond at its eastern end. The numbers on the map are identified in the accompanying apportionment as follows:

- 170 House & Garden (31 perches, owned by Ebenezer Osborn, tenanted by George Rasbrook)
- 171 House & Garden (30 perches, owned by William Makin, tenanted by Pater Bower)
- 171a House & Garden (9 perches, owned by William Makin, tenanted by John Hollocks)
- 172 House & Garden (25 perches, owned by William Makin, tenanted by John Blumb)

The house or cottage at the eastern end of the present garden was owned by Ebenezer Osborn, who also owned Down Hall in the valley bottom and the field to the east (known as Upper Warwicks Field). The remaining three houses were let to different tenants but all belonged to William Makin of Mortimer's Farm. The double appearance of the number '171' is unusual and potentially confusing given the presence of a third building on the Ordnance Survey, but probably indicates only that both the house and garden were divided into three units.



The Second Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1904, clearly showing the three original rooms of the Old Thatches separated into three cottages. The bread oven is shown as a projection from the eastern wall, and the two small outbuildings were probably privies. The second cottage to the east, as shown on the tithe map, possesses its own privy, but a fourth cottage has appeared between the two. No trace of either this or the easternmost cottage now survives above ground.

The Ordnance Survey of 1904 shows an additional building between the houses depicted on the tithe map, and it is possible that '171' was included twice in error and a different number should have related to this fourth cottage. Whatever the case it would appear that by 1904 the site of Old Thatches was occupied by no fewer than five separate properties, of which two disappeared during the 20th century without obvious trace.

Old Thatches, Preston St Mary
Reconstruction of Original Ground Plan
(showing all ceiling joists)

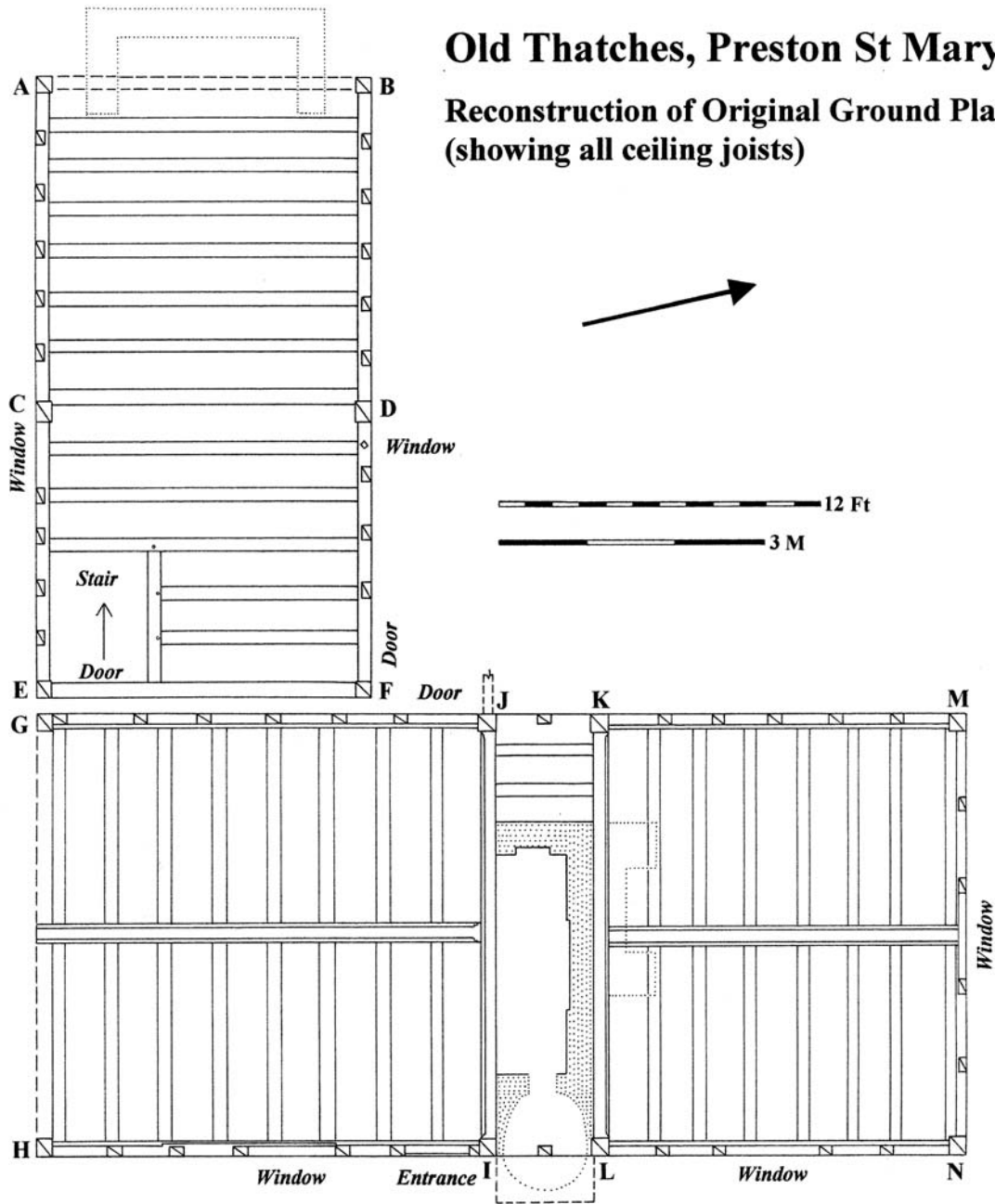


Figure 1

Descriptive Record

The two wings of the building are separately described with reference to the plan shown in figure 1, which associates each storey post with an individual letter. The relationship of the two wings and the nature of the original house are considered in the following section of the report. The accompanying figures, which are fully measured and include scales in feet (top) and metres, indicate surviving timbers with solid lines and reconstruct missing timbers with broken lines where evidence of their positions exists. All structural pegs are included.

Western Wing (Structure A-B-E-F)

The westernmost of the two wings that form the historic part of the house is indicated by the letters A-B-E-F on figure 1, which reconstructs the original wall timbers and ceiling joists.

Proportions & Framing

The wing extends to 6.9 metres in overall length by 3.8 metres in width (22 feet 6 inches by 12 feet 6 inches) and assuming a normal plinth of 15 cm (6 inches) beneath its ground sill would have risen originally to 3.3 metres at its eaves (10 feet 9 inches). There is no trace of the original roof structure, although some bird's-mouth rafter housings remain visible in the charred upper surface of the front roof plate.

The original timber-framed walls are fully framed (rather than nailed) and consist chiefly of oak studs that are tenoned and pegged to the surviving ground sills, mid-rails and roof-plates. The studs between the sill and mid-rail are 162 cm in height (64 inches) and those between the mid-rail and roof-plate are 92 cm (37 inches). The studs of the front wall are approximately 15 cm by 10 in section (6 inches by 4), but the only three studs which remain in the rear are significantly larger at 19 cm by 10 (7½ inches by 4) and appear to be of elm rather than oak. The 15 cm by 10 cm oak joists of the original ceiling span the width of the structure and rest on the mid-rails of 18 cm by 13 (7 inches by 5) to which they are secured by vertical pegs. A framed aperture of 158 cm by 110 (64 inches by 43) lies in the southern corner of this ceiling but its trimmer is attached to an open-framed mid-rail (E-F) which contains bird's-mouth rafter housings and was apparently a secondary, re-used component; the aperture may therefore represent an alteration to the original structure and relate to the construction of the eastern wing. This re-used rail is the only remaining timber of the eastern gable (truss E-F), but the tie-beam of its western counterpart survives and contains evidence of a solid wall as shown in figure 4. The structure contains two unequal bays divided by a pair of jowled storey posts (C-D) but there is no evidence of an original partition – although the ceiling joists have been considerably altered during the 20th century and the existence of such a partition remains possible if unlikely. There is no evidence of wall bracing.

Infill

The external surfaces of the wall studs and rails to the south (elevation A-B, shown in figure 2) are weathered and set flush in a manner that indicates they were exposed to view when the structure was first built. The sides of each vertical timber contain notches to secure the horizontal staves of wattle-and-daub set between the timbers. The few studs of the rear wall, in contrast, are externally rough-hewn with fragments of bark adhering and, along with the oak posts and rails, show no sign of weathering. A single panel of original wattle-and-daub survives beneath the window sill, and consists of clay, chalk and straw on a framework of vertical laths and coppice poles tied to horizontal staves by twisted withies and strips of bark. These staves are set in notches like those of the front wall, but the missing outer surface of the daub may be presumed to have extended across the entire surface of the wall to conceal its

timbers. A panel of similar daub in a 20th century glazed frame in elevation B-D may also be original but is not *in situ* as the studs of this area have been replaced.

Original Layout

The posts, mid-rails and part of the ground sill in elevation B-F remain intact, along with three studs and a window, and the original wall can be entirely reconstructed as shown in figure 2. The position of an external door against post F is indicated by the lack of any stud mortise in the lower surface of the mid-rail. The sill and single diamond mullion (6 cm or 2.5 inches square) of an original unglazed window are complete, but lack any evidence of a shutter. Gable A-B preserves only its posts and tie-beam with evidence of studs above ceiling level but there is no evidence of its ground-floor arrangement as its mid-rail has been removed to accommodate a secondary chimney (figure 4). The southern elevation A-E, which faces the nearby road, has been considerably altered in numerous phases but its probable original appearance is reconstructed in figure 3. With the exception of its externally exposed timber frame, its pattern is similar to that of its northern counterpart with evidence of a narrow window adjoining post C. The mid-rail above this window contains no mortise for a mullion, however, and it presumably possessed a separate frame or perhaps projected from the plane of the wall as a shallow oriel.

Alterations

The structure has undergone many alterations, including the insertion of several windows, a gable chimney and at least three external doors in addition to the original. The mid-rail in elevation A-C has been cut and its western section lowered to form the sill of a large window while the eastern section was raised to accommodate a new door against post C. A door has also been inserted against post E in the southern wall and the lower edge of the mid-rail removed accordingly; it is possible that this door is an original feature but if so would later have been obstructed by the stair discussed below. Both inserted southern doors had been blocked before or during the 1980s. The interior has been divided into two rooms by a solid partition of re-used studs that appear to date only from the extensive renovation that followed the first fire of the 1980s, and a new access door has been cut into the northern wall against post D. A large brick chimney of late-18th century appearance was built against the western gable and its wide fireplace narrowed and provided with a new timber lintel during the 20th century. The north-western quarter of the property appears to date entirely from the 1980s, as do its external windows and cement cladding.

Date

The date of the original structure is difficult to determine with precision given the complete lack of decorative features and the absence of its roof. The ‘diamond’ mullion of the window in elevation D-F is of relatively small section compared to similar features of the medieval and early Tudor periods, and suggests a date in the second half of the 16th century. The very narrow chamfers to the mid-rails indicate a similar period, but a slightly earlier origin cannot be ruled out.

Eastern Wing (Structure G-H-M-N)

Proportions & Framing

The eastern wing abuts the western wing at right-angles as shown in figure 1 and extends to 10.5 metres in overall length by 4.9 metres in width (34 feet 6 inches by 16 feet 3 inches). At the southern end of the structure, where the apparently original brick plinth beneath the

ground sill is 20 cm (8 inches) high, the structure would have risen originally to 3.2 metres at its eaves (10 feet 4 inches), but this increases to 3.9 metres (11 feet 6 inches) at its northern end where the plinth is 66 cm (26 inches) high. This reflects the natural slope of the ground. There is no trace of any original roof structure, but the absence of mortises in the tie-beam of the open truss (J-I) suggests that it was of side-purlin type. A number of bird's-mouth rafter housings are visible in the charred upper surfaces of the roof plates.

The original timber-framed walls are fully framed and consist of oak studs that are tenoned and pegged to the surviving ground sills and roof-plates. There are no mid-rails in the structure, and the studs rise 2.6 metres (8 feet 6 inches) between the sills and plates. The external corners at posts H, M and N are provided with two externally trenched braces as shown in the figures, but post G was braced only in the direction of the southern gable as an original doorway adjoined its northern edge (figure 6); the brace in elevation G-J rose to the final stud in consequence. The wing consists of three unequal bays including a narrow bay of 1.1 metres (42 inches) which contains a chimney (J-K-I-L); the southern bay (G-J-H-I) is the largest, with 4.8 metres (15 feet 10 inches) between its storey posts, while the northern bay contains 3.8 metres (12 feet 4 inches). The southern and northern bays preserve ceilings of largely original flat-sectioned common joists, each measuring 14 cm by 9 (5.5 inches by 3.5); these joists are secured by soffit tenons with diminished shoulders to axial joists of 24 cm square in section (9.5 inches), and their outer ends are lodged on clamps (rails) that are pegged to the wall studs. The rails, axial and binding joists are deeply chamfered, and those of the binding joists and the southern axial joist terminate in neatly curled stops known as 'lamb's tongues'.

The eastern roof-plate contains a face-halved-and-bladed scarf joint between posts I and L, but, unusually, the southern blade is 'housed' (i.e. it does not penetrate to the soffit). The joint appears to be similar to a rare Essex example illustrated by Cecil Hewett (*English Historic Carpentry*, 1980, fig.269, shown here as figure 8), although each blade is secured by a single peg instead of three, and the northern blade at Old Thatches may have been similarly housed – it is unfortunately too badly damaged by fire to be certain. Many individual timbers in the building were re-used from earlier structures, and contain various mortises, brace trenches and mullion housings that have no relevance to their present positions. This evidence of re-use is most apparent in their external surfaces, but in the smaller, northern bay can be seen from within; in addition to several wall studs the axial joist of this bay has been re-cycled and contains an additional sequence of pegged joist mortises but lacks chamfer stops. Corner posts G, M and N contain mortises for mid-rails that would have interrupted the original studs and are either carpentry errors or evidence that these too have been re-used. The scantlings of the re-used studs vary considerably, but those which appear to be primary to the existing structure measure 12.5 cm by 8 cm (5 inches by 3) in section.

The brick chimney which occupies the narrow central bay is offset to the east as shown in the figures, and contains a single fireplace facing the larger, southern bay. This fireplace is 2.5 metres (8 feet 2 inches) in width and 1 metre (38 inches) in depth but was originally wider as its eastern pier has been rebuilt to incorporate an oven and its chamfered timber lintel truncated. Much of the brickwork beneath the lintel has been renewed or heavily re-pointed in the 20th century, but the lintel and brick superstructure may be original to the building. The binding joists which frame the narrow bay bear chamfers only to their outer edges, suggesting they were designed to flank the brickwork of a chimney. The lintel bears traces of 'daisy wheel' apotropaic marks but these have been almost completely eroded by sand-blasting.

Infill

Like its timber frame, the infill of the eastern wing differs considerably from that of the western. The daub of clay, chalk and straw is secured by vertical poles and split laths set between the studs, like those of the western structure, but these are tied by withies to

horizontal battens of split poles that are nailed and trenched to the external surfaces of the timbers (shown on figure 5). Large areas of original infill survive, particularly at the southern end of elevation H-I, together with numerous battens, but the batten trenches are found on all surviving external walls. The southern gable, G-H, was completely rebuilt in the 1980s to leave only its corner posts, G and H, *in situ*, but these posts do not bear batten trenches to their southern surfaces (unlike their eastern and western) and it is possible that the timbers of this road-facing gable were externally exposed to match those of the western wing.

Original Layout

With the exception of its southern gable and roof the timber frame of the eastern wing remained largely intact and its original layout can be reconstructed with confidence. The rooms on each side of the chimney were lit by central windows in their eastern elevations, and the northern gable also contained a central window. There were no windows in the western elevation. These windows were 84 cm wide by 58 cm deep (33 inches by 23) and were framed by sills and lintels that were pegged and tenoned to the adjacent studs; each sill and lintel mortise is approximately 10 cm deep (4 inches) but unfortunately no examples survive to indicate the type of mullion they contained. The ceiling clamp of the southern room is rebated where it adjoins the wall to form a groove for a sliding shutter, but there is no such evidence in the northern room.

An original external door opened into the north-eastern corner of the larger, southern room, as indicated by its remaining lintel and southern jamb. This lintel contains an empty mortise for a missing northern jamb which would have abutted post I, and bears a neat chamfer to its lower external edge that continued down both jambs with mason's mitres at its two corners. There is no evidence of an arched head, and the door was originally 75 cm wide by 165 cm high between the ground sill and lintel (2 feet 6 inches by 5 feet 5 inches). A door of similar proportions lay immediately opposite in the western wall, of which only the pegged mortise of its lintel in post J now remains, while a third door lay at the southern end of the same wall and coincided with the ceiling trap in the western wing. The tenoned and pegged lintel and both jambs of this third doorway survive intact (figure 6). The presence of the original door against post J, which was the only one of the three to remain in use (leading to a passage between the western wing and the extension of the 1980s) is also indicated by the irregular spacing of the wall studs.

Alterations

Like the western wing, the eastern contains evidence of numerous alterations that are consistent with its sub-division into separate tenements as shown on 19th century maps. Three secondary doors had been cut into the eastern elevation to the right and left of the window in the northern room and in the same position as the original window in the southern (as shown by the interruptions to the ground sill in figure 5). All three doors had been blocked prior to the recent fire. A brick chimney has been built against the rear, northern wall of the earlier chimney in order to heat the northern room; this is of early-19th century appearance but possesses a brick fireplace of the late-20th century. A brick bread oven of similar period with an iron internal door has been built into the eastern side of the chimney. The oven formerly projected beyond the plane of the wall and was probably sheltered by a lean-to or shed as indicated on the Ordnance Survey of 1904, but had been truncated prior to the fire.

Date

The distinctively curled 'lamb's tongue' chamfer stops found on the principal ceiling joists and storey posts of the eastern wing became fashionable during the final years of the 16th century and the first quarter of the 17th. The relatively small size of the primary wall studs and ceiling compared to earlier buildings also suggests a date in the 17th century, as does the

method of securing the wattle-and-daub to externally nailed and trenched battens. The extensive re-use of timber and the straight, thin wall braces of the northern gable and western wall indicate a date towards the end of the appropriate range, but the absence of primary bracing and other features of the mid-17th century provides a *terminus ante quem*. A date of c. 1620-40 can be advanced with some confidence.

Historic Analysis and Significance

Although containing two distinct phases of construction and latterly forming three cottages, Old Thatches can be interpreted as a single domestic house of the early-17th century. It contains the standard tripartite layout of its period, with a 'central' hall lying between a parlour to the north and a service room to the west, albeit in the form of an 'L' rather than in-line. The relative importance of the hall as a general living, cooking and entertaining area is emphasised by its proportions as the largest room in the house (at 4.9 metres by 4.7 internally, or 16 feet by 15.5), by its well-framed ceiling with fashionable 'lamb's tongue' chamfer stops, and by its possession of a wide cooking fireplace. The smaller parlour (at 4.1 metres by 4.7, or 13.5 feet by 15.5) was not heated, except by radiated warmth from the back of the hall chimney, and contained obviously second-hand timbers in both its ceiling and walls. The service area was an exceptionally long 7 metres in internal length (from the wall of the hall) by an exceptionally narrow 3.5 metres (23 feet by 11.5 feet), but may have been sub-divided; it was very poorly lit with only a single narrow window in each of its long walls (and probably another in its western gable) and would have been ideally suited as a cool dairy or buttery. The upper storey was reached by a stair rising from the south-western corner of the hall, as shown by the ceiling trap and framed door in this position, while the service room was entered by an external door in its north-eastern corner. It seems likely that this external door was linked to the adjacent hall doorway by a porch-like structure, and an un-pegged mortise in the western face of post J may have secured its roof-plate (shown to the left in figure 7). The lack of fenestration to the western wall of the parlour (K-M) may have been due to the presence of a contemporary lean-to, but there was no obvious structural evidence of this.

A house of these proportions in a rural location probably formed the residence of a husbandman farming a respectable thirty or forty acres of land, and in most respects is typical of hundreds of such buildings that survive across East Anglia. Expectations of domestic comfort increased rapidly during the 16th and early-17th centuries, fuelled by rising disposable incomes, and houses were often rebuilt or altered piecemeal to keep pace with the process of change. The 16th century service structure probably belonged to an earlier house on the site, and may have been a relatively recent addition to a medieval open hall when the latter was replaced in turn during the early-17th century. It is possible, however, particularly given its unusual proportions and lack of fenestration, that it was designed as a free-standing non-domestic building such as stable. The relationship of the structure to any previous house on the site may be established by below-ground archaeology.

The most unusual and historically interesting aspect of the present house is the position of its original entrance passage. The standard Tudor house was entered by a screened cross-passage between opposing front and rear doors at the 'low' end of its hall, i.e. the end opposite that which adjoined the parlour. By the mid-17th century this arrangement had become outmoded and most new houses were built with lobby entrances, where the principal entrance opened into a small lobby in front the chimney which now divided the hall and parlour. Old Thatches is a rare half-way-house between these forms, and illustrates the process of transition between the two. It is likely that other examples exist but have not yet been recognised, particularly as the type remains unpublished. The opposing external doors lie not at the low end of the hall but at the high end immediately in front of the fireplace which backs onto the parlour. Figure 9 shows an identical pattern in a rural house of similar period and status approximately 10 miles to the south in Lamarsh, Essex, although in that case the service bay is of more usual

alignment and scale. The advantage of a 'high-end cross-passage' which passes directly in front of the fireplace is at first difficult to appreciate; visitors and draughts would surely have disturbed anyone attempting to cook or warm themselves at the fire. For these reasons the layout was no-doubt short-lived and experimental, and examples are undoubtedly few, but it does possess a certain logic.

The explanation probably relates to the inability of smaller buildings to accommodate the new lobby entrances. Where new 17th century houses of Yeoman status contained back-to-back fireplaces in wide chimneys to heat both their halls and parlours, poorer individuals could afford only one fireplace in a narrow chimney; the roofs of the same Yeoman houses would normally range between 18 and 22 feet in width, while those of husbandmen languished at 16 feet or less. The Yeoman builder could therefore readily adopt the new gentry fashion of the lobby entrance, which allowed him to enter either his hall or his parlour directly without disturbing the occupants of the other. At 7 or 8 feet in width by at least 4 or 5 feet in depth his lobby was ample for the purpose, and often contained a newel stair in addition. The husbandman, however, was unable to imitate his betters as both his house and his chimney bay were too narrow for the purpose. In attempting to achieve an entrance as close to the ideal as possible, with 'almost direct' access to both hall and parlour, he was forced to place his door at the high end of his hall. With the installation of an internal porch or screen, similar to the modern example which survives in the north-western corner at Old Thatches, he was able to create a reasonably spacious entrance lobby in the corner of his hall that aped those in the chimney bays of larger houses. The internal screen, for which original evidence survives in Lamarsh, would also have shielded the adjacent fireplace from unwanted draughts. The logic of this analysis is less clear at Preston than Lamarsh, as here the eastern door appears to be the principal entrance, yet there was no room for an internal porch in this corner of the fireplace. Why was the door not placed in the opposite, south-eastern corner of the hall? The reason probably relates to the builder's desire for a fashionably symmetrical front wall, with its door placed almost central to the rendered and paraged elevation and between its two identical windows (in contrast to the window-less back wall); as in most East Anglian farmhouses even today, the fashionable front door remains securely locked except on rare special occasions and for most intents and purposes the back door serves as the principal entrance. On this basis, the ostensibly inexplicable 'high-end cross-passage' at Old Thatches would have neatly respected the dictates of both comfort and fashion.

Dendrochronology

Old Thatches was inspected during demolition on 13th August 2007 by Dr Ian Tyers of Dendrochronological Consultancy Ltd. He was unable to find timbers worthy of sampling and reports as follows:

I visited Old Thatches on 13/08/2007 in the company of Leigh Alston. I examined timbers in the surviving walls, the ceiling and the fireplace. Leigh provided interpretative discussion in response to my queries about individual timbers in the building.

The building does not meet the minimal criteria for sampling on two separate grounds: Firstly, none of the oak timbers appear to contain sufficient annual growth rings and secondly there are only three or four timbers that even approached the minimum and at least one pair of these were two parts of the same tree. It should also be noted that some of the timbers, particularly on the internal wall framing, were of a type other than oak – probably elm, although I did not formally interpret their wood type.

Suffolk has proved particularly difficult for dendrochronology as the majority of surviving vernacular buildings contain the same mix and quality of timber as Old Thatches.

Figures 2-9

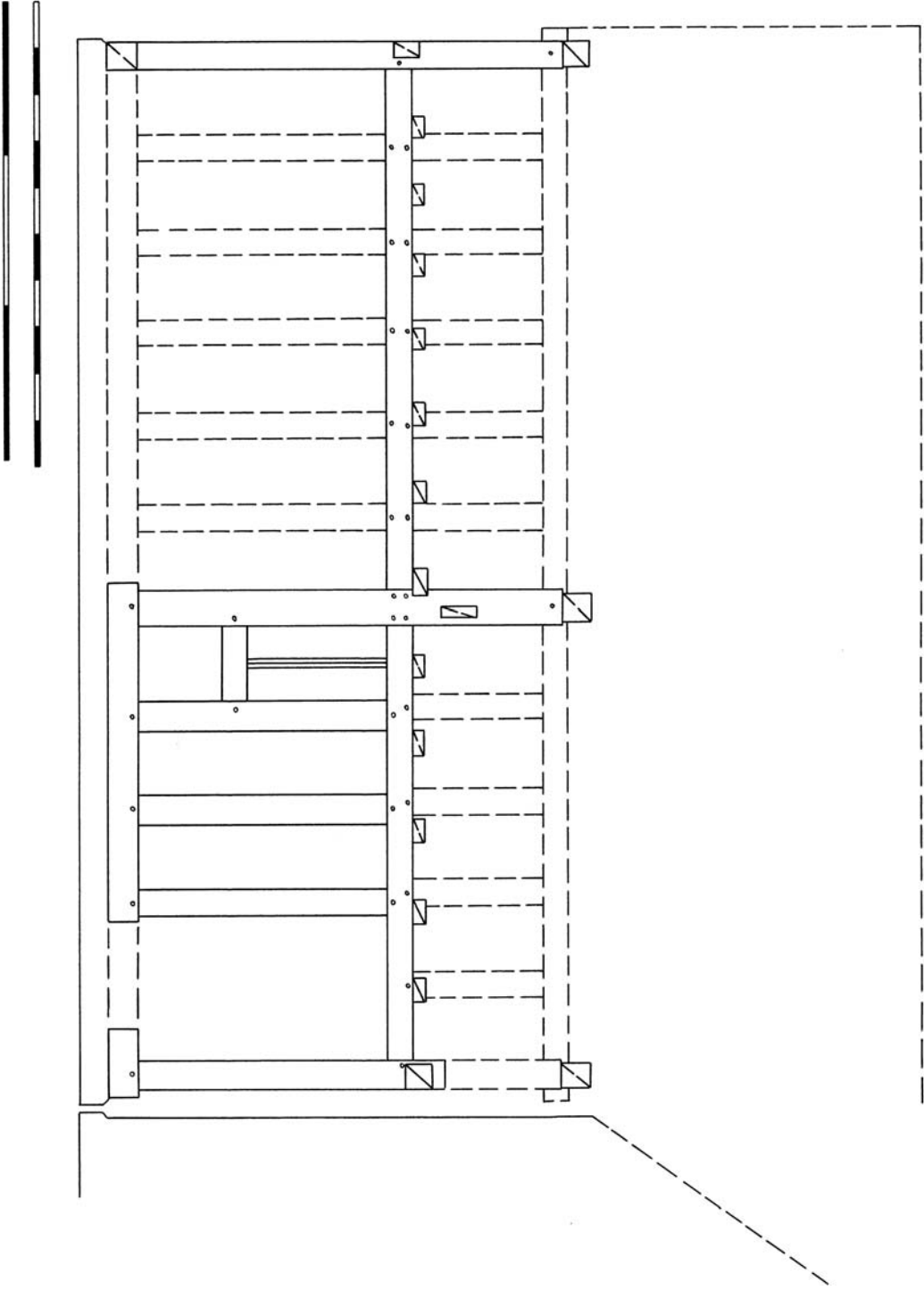


Figure 2
Internal Elevation B-F

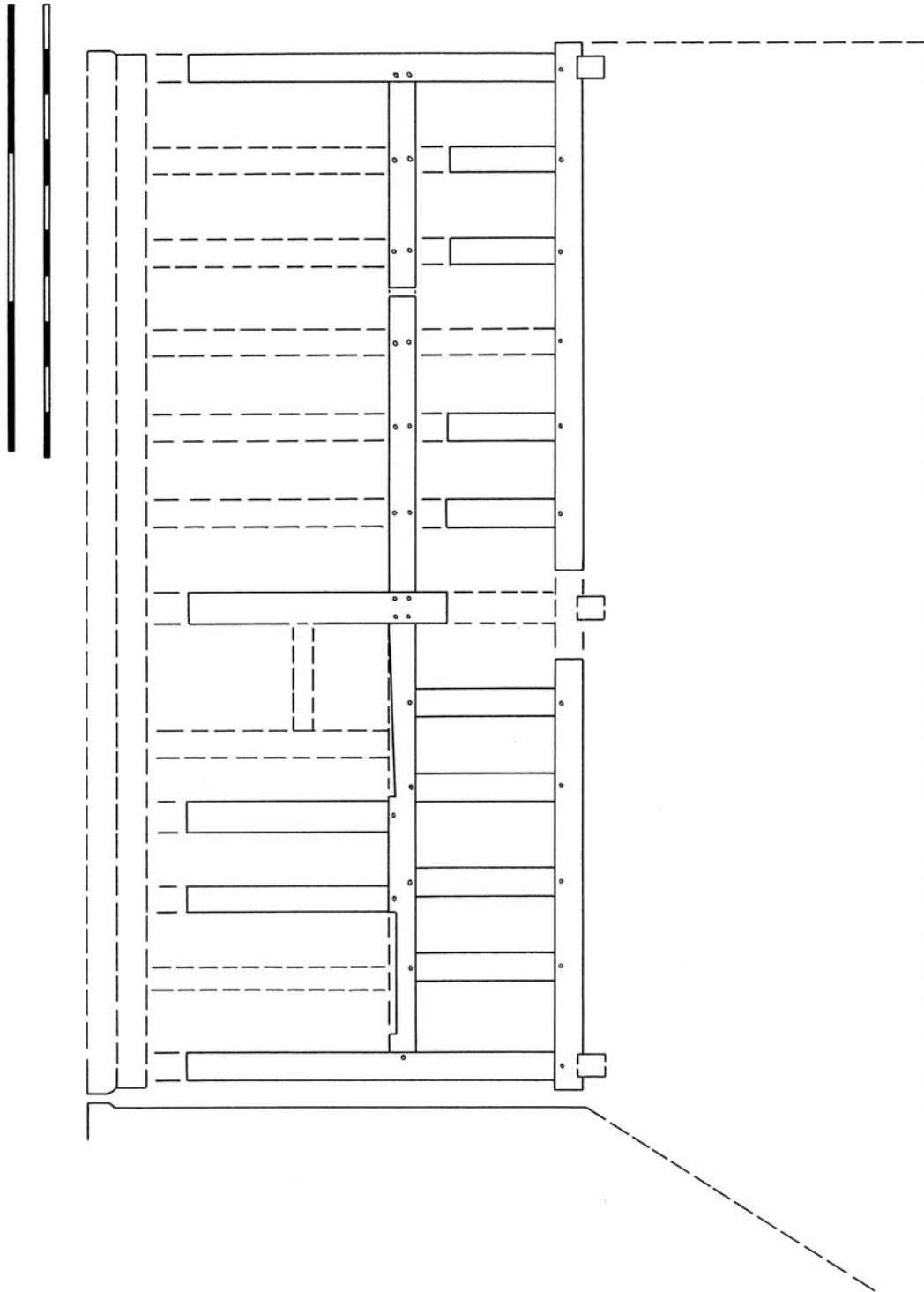


Figure 3
External Elevation A-E

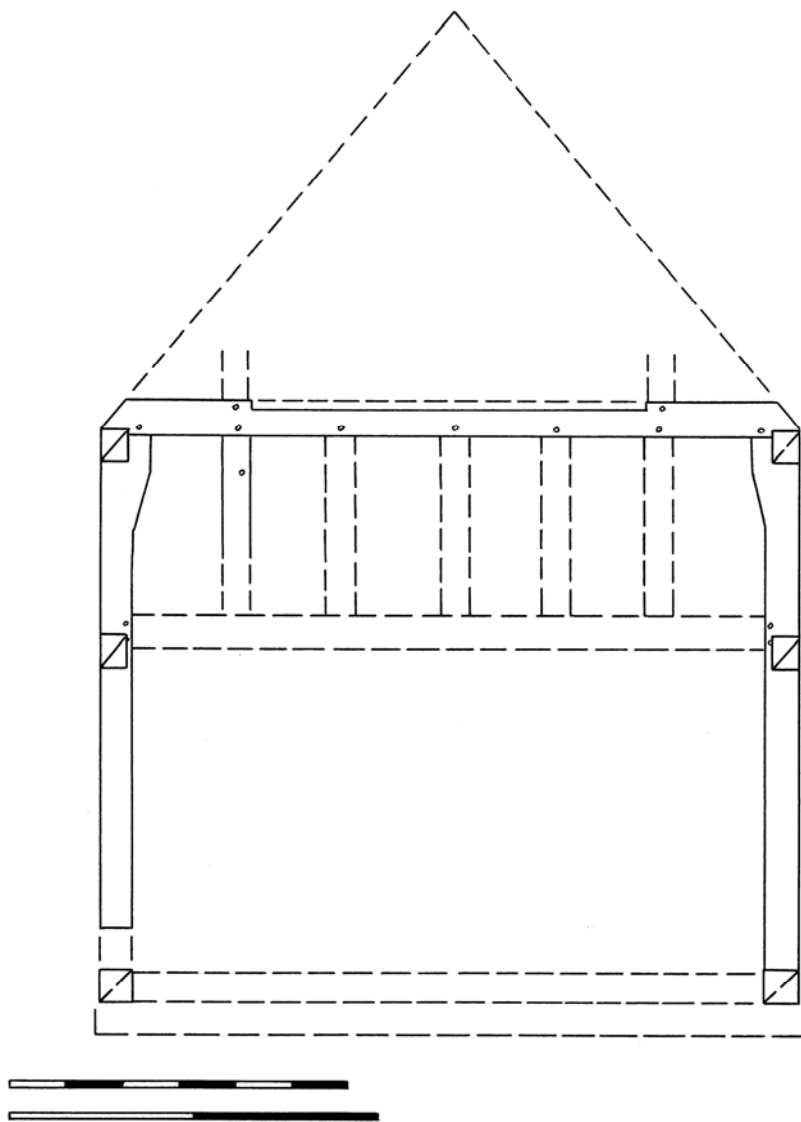


Figure 4
Internal Elevation A-B

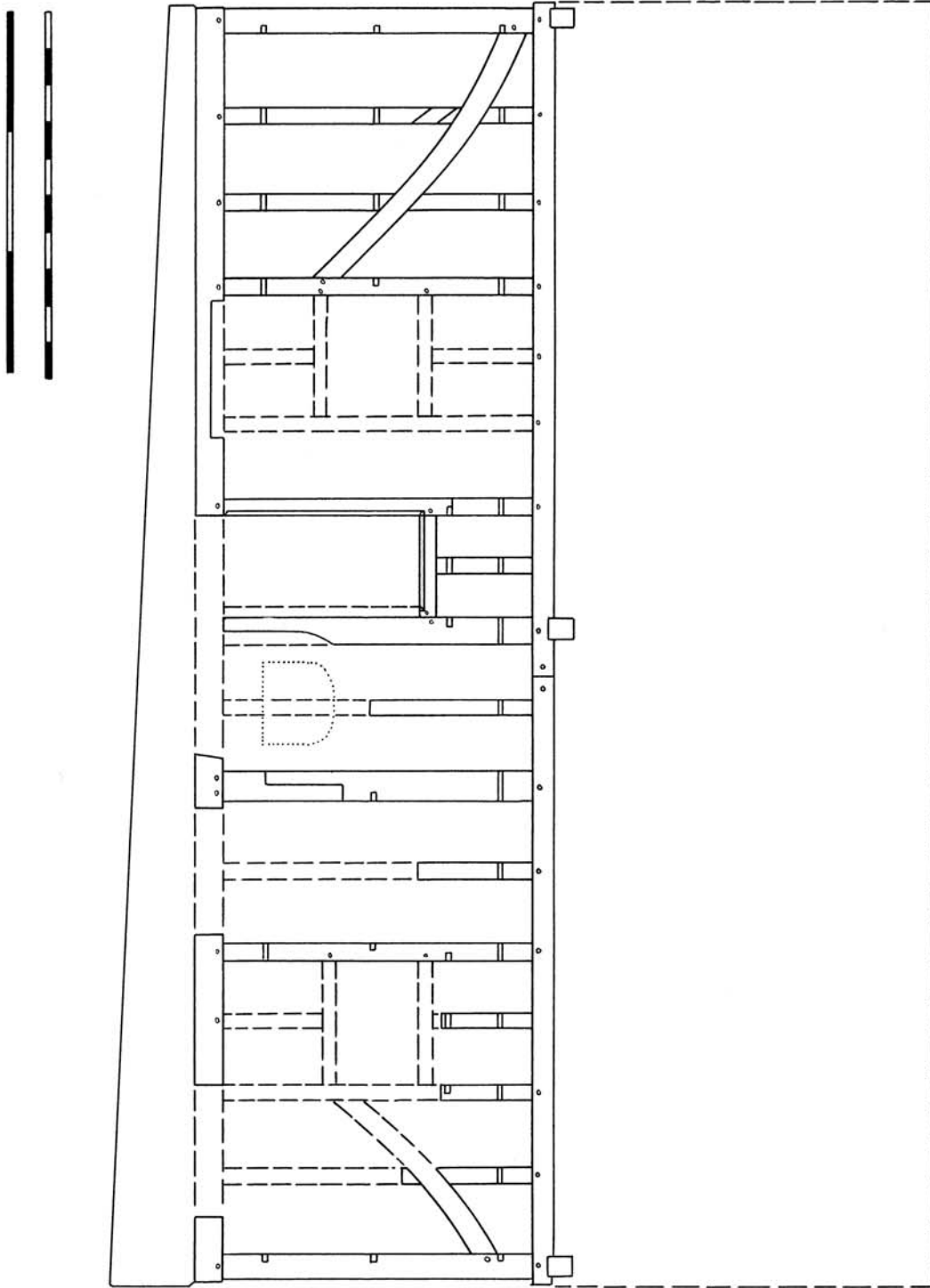


Figure 5
External Elevation H-N

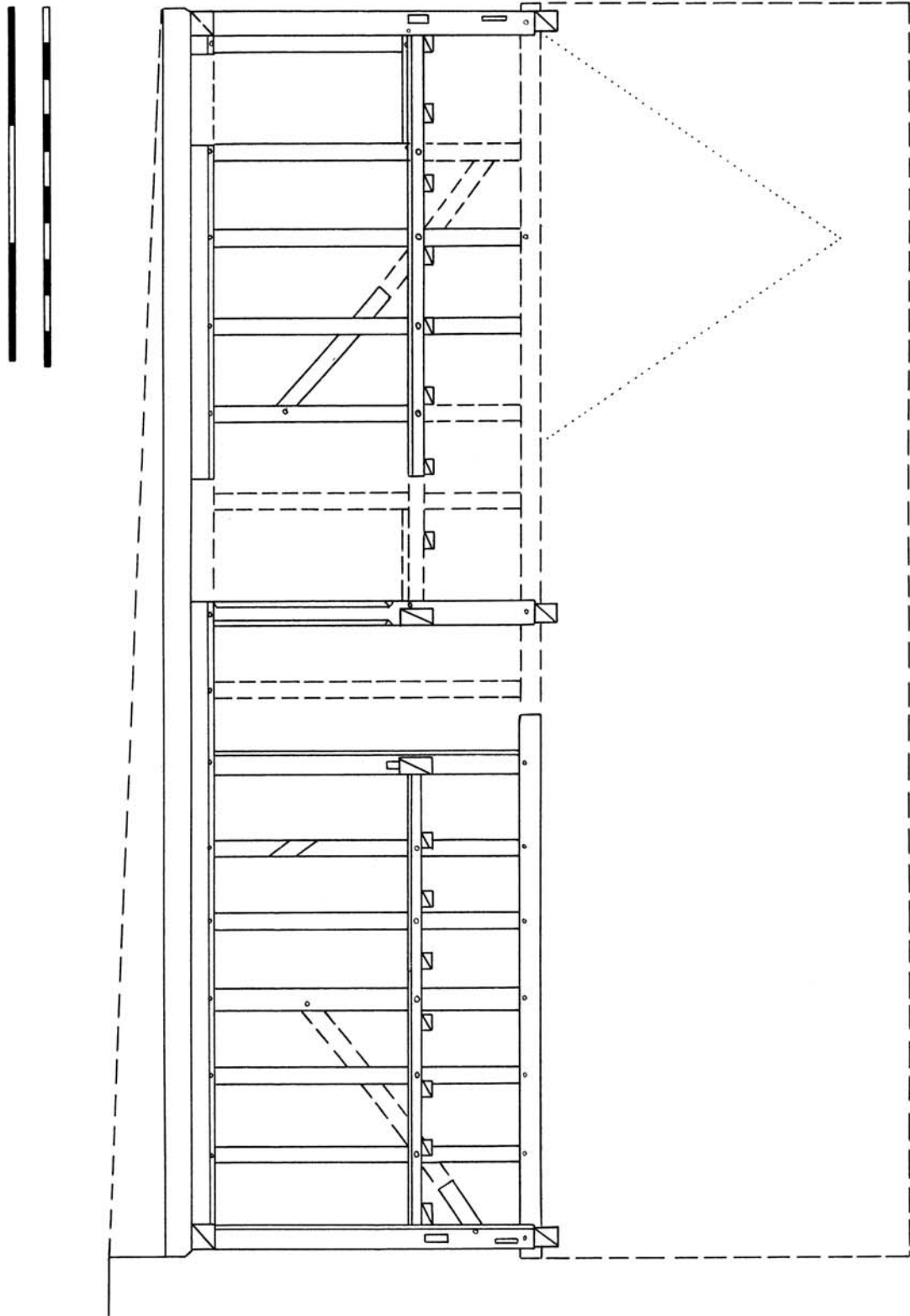


Figure 6
Internal Elevation G-M

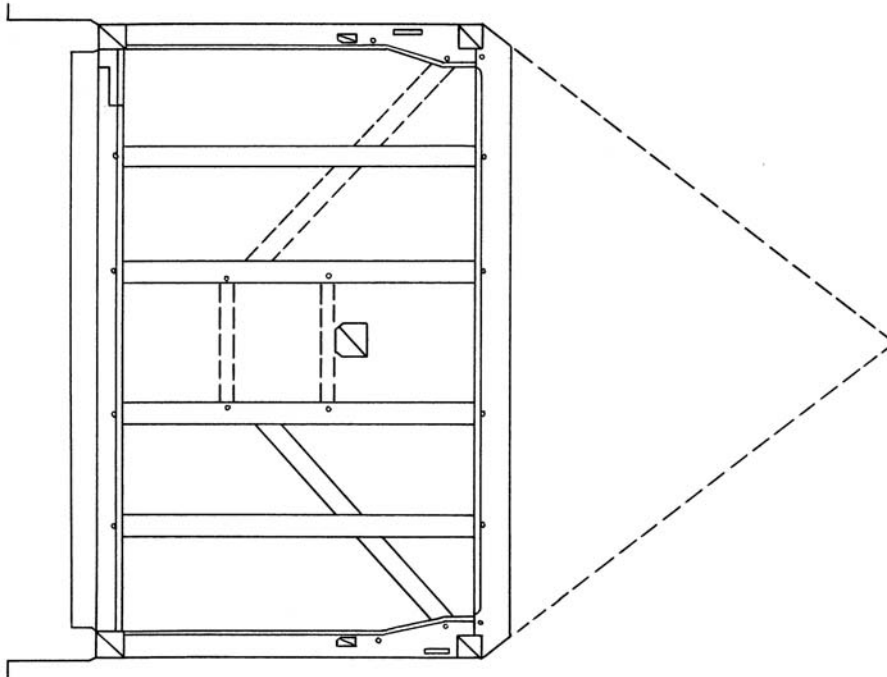
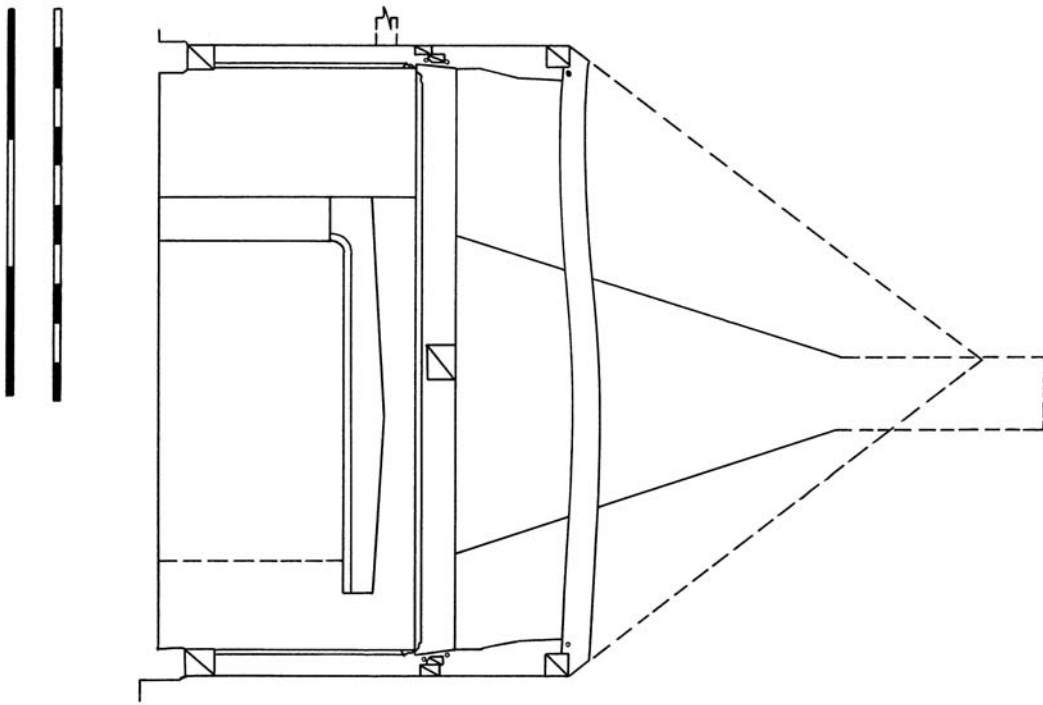


Figure 7
Internal Elevations J-I (top) and M-N

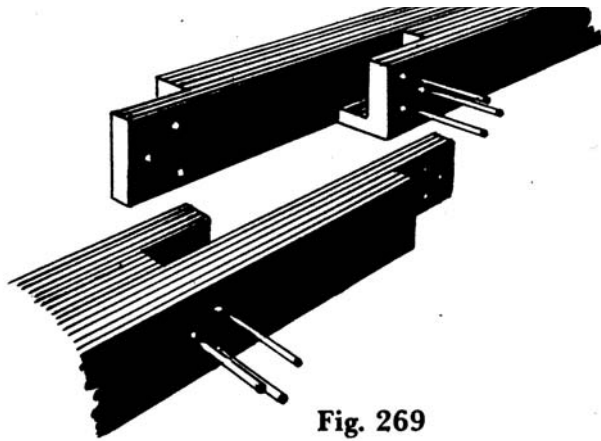


Fig. 269

Figure 8

The unusual scarf joint illustrated by Hewett as figure 269 of English Historic Carpentry and apparently identical to the charred example at Old Thatches. The external blade of the joint is 'housed', i.e. does not penetrate to the soffit as in the normal form of face-halved-and-bladed scarf.

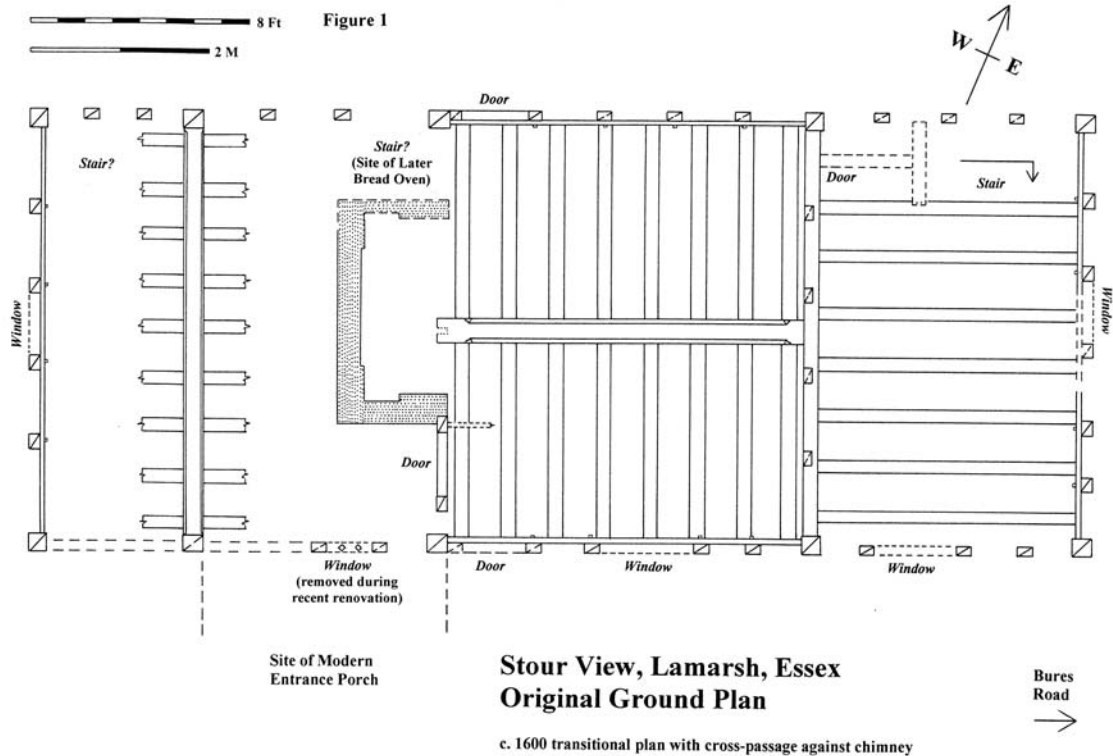


Figure 9

Original plan of 'Stour View' Lamarsh, showing a similar 'high-end cross-passage' of similar period and type to Old Thatches

Appendix 1 (on accompanying CD): Full Photographic Record

Description of Photographs in Appendix 1

Photograph no.

1. General view of site from south.
2. External Elevation A-E from south.
3. External Elevation G-H from south.
4. General view of site from east.
5. External elevation H-N from east.
6. General view of site from north.
7. External elevation N-M from north.
8. General view from site looking north (showing hill top location).
9. General view of site from west.
10. External elevation B-A from west.
11. Detail of external brickwork to chimney of gable A-B.
12. Later chimney at truss L-K with rear of chimney to left.
13. Detail of brickwork to rear of chimney at truss L-K.
14. Internal view of elevation M-N.
15. Internal view of elevation N-L.
16. Internal view of elevation K-M.
17. Detail of axial joist looking towards elevation N-L showing re-use mortise.
18. Detail of ceiling clamp at elevation K-M.
19. Detail of chamfer stop to binding joist at post L from north.
20. Detail of chamfer stop to binding joist at post K from north with re-use mortise in post.
21. Internal view of elevation G-J.
22. Internal view of truss J-I showing fireplace.
23. Detail of chamfer stops to axial joist at binding joist of truss J-I.

24. Detail of fireplace looking towards post I showing later oven.
25. Detail of fireplace looking towards post J.
26. Internal view of elevation I-H.
27. Internal view of elevation H-G.
28. Exterior of elevation F-B from east.
29. Detail of window from east (post D to right).
30. Detail of original infill beneath window in elevation F-D.
31. Detail of window with original infill panel beneath sill.
32. Detail of infill in elevation F-D showing withy ties.
33. Interior of elevation A-B showing later fireplace.
34. Interior of elevation B-D.
35. Interior of truss D-C showing recent partition.
36. Interior of elevation C-A.
37. Interior of elevation E-C.
38. Detail of blocked stair trap in ceiling looking towards post E.
39. Interior of post D showing original window to right.
40. Interior of elevation A-B on upper storey.
41. Interior of elevation C-A on upper storey.
42. Interior of elevation E-C on upper storey.
43. Upper storey of structure A-B-E-F from north-east.
44. Upper storey of structure A-B-E-F from east.
45. Upper storey of structure G-H-M-N from west.
46. Truss J-I on upper storey.
47. Truss I-J on upper storey showing later chimney to right.
48. Interior of elevation M-N on upper storey.
49. Interior of elevation H-G on upper storey (all but posts renewed).
50. Detail of stair from upper storey looking towards post L.
51. Detail of original brick plinth in external elevation L-N.

52. External elevation H-N from south-east.
53. External elevation H-I showing original brace and infill.
54. External elevation H-I showing detail of brace and infill.
55. Detail of brace showing re-use trench in elevation H-I.
56. Detail of infill construction in elevation H-I.
57. Detail of infill construction above lintel in elevation H-I.
58. Detail of original entrance lintel in elevation H-I.
59. Truncated oven in external elevation I-L.
60. Detail of truncated oven in elevation I-L.
61. Interior of oven in elevation I-L.
62. Detail of oven cutting post I.
63. Detail of scarf joint in elevation I-L.
64. Elevation J-G from west.
65. External elevation A-E from south.
66. Detail of elevation J-G showing re-use evidence.
67. External elevation A-C from south.
68. External elevation C-E from south.
69. External elevation F-D from north-west showing later stair.
70. Detail of external elevation C-E showing weathered studs.
71. External elevation M-K from west.
72. External elevation N-M from north.
73. Detail of joist mortises in axial joist between trusses J-I and G-H.
74. General view of site from south-east.

Appendix 2 (pp.23-28): Selected Printed Photographs



A2.1 External elevation H-N from east prior to demolition



A2.2 External elevation H-N from south-east after commencement of demolition, showing original brace to left and infill of wattle-and-daub attached to externally trenched laths. A secondary bread oven against the eastern side of the chimney formerly projected beyond the plane of the wall.



A2.3 Internal view of truss J-I from south, showing partly collapsed fireplace and largely original 17th century ceiling in room G-J-H-I.



A2.4 Upper storey of structure G-H-M-N from west showing 17th century chimney to right with secondary chimney to left.



A2.5 Detail of external elevation H-I from east showing neatly chamfered original entrance lintel (bottom) with mason's mitres and original infill above (post I to right).



A2.6 Detail of external elevation H-I from east showing entrance door lintel (right-hand jamb lacking) and infill construction: Withy ties secure horizontal half-poles that are trenced and nailed against the exterior to vertical poles and half-poles between the studs.



A2.7 Detail of external elevation H-I from east showing truncated brick oven between posts I and J in centre



A2.8 Interior of brick oven between posts I and J



A2.9 Elevation J-G from west showing infill trenches and a window sill or lintel re-used as a stud to left (with original brace attached). Former door and stair trap to right.



A2.10 External elevation A-E from south



A2.11 Detail of external elevation A-E from south-east showing externally weathered studs with notches for infill staves (in contrast to infill of structure G-M-H-N).



A2.12 General view of site from south-east showing demolition nearing completion (chimneys to remain *in situ*).

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