



**University of
Leicester**

Archaeological Services

**Westhorpe Farmhouse,
12 Westhorpe, Ashley,
Northamptonshire, (SP 793 908):
Historic Building Recording**

By Sophie Clarke



ULAS Report No 2011-142
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**Westhorpe Farmhouse,
12 Westhorpe, Ashley
Northamptonshire:
Historic Building Recording**

NGR: SP 793 908

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Sophie Clarke

Summary

A programme of historic building recording at Westhorpe Farmhouse, 12 Westhorpe, Ashley, Leicestershire was undertaken in advance of proposed redevelopment. The farmhouse is a Grade II listed iron-stone building, likely to have been constructed in the latter part of the 17th century. The main aim of the work was to provide a record of the building, prior to the removal of the c1930s tin roof cover and the replacement of the thatch beneath. The original roof construction consists of a series of common rafters, formed of long ash poles, laid over the backs of the ridge piece and side purlins, fixed in place with timber pegs. The early thatch consisted of bundles of long wheat straw, tied to the rafters in a regular pattern and woven through with 'Norfolk' or water reed.

1. Introduction

This report presents the results of a programme of historic building recording at Westhorpe Farmhouse, 12 Westhorpe, Ashley, Leicestershire. It has been prepared by Sophie Clarke of University of Leicester Archaeological Services' Historic Buildings Team, on behalf of Mrs S. Shaen-Carter.

Westhorpe Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building, located within the Ashley village Conservation Area. In accordance with PSS5 and as a condition secured upon the granting of listed building consent (KET/2010/0750; para. 6), it was required that a programme of historic building recording should be carried out, prior to the commencement of works.



Plate 1. Westhorpe Farmhouse, front elevation, looking north-west.

2. Site location

The village of Ashley is located in Northamptonshire, close to the northern boundary with Leicestershire, approximately 7km to the north-east of Market Harborough. Westhorpe Farmhouse is located at 12 Westhorpe, on the southern side of Main Street within the historic village core, at National Grid Reference SP 793 908.

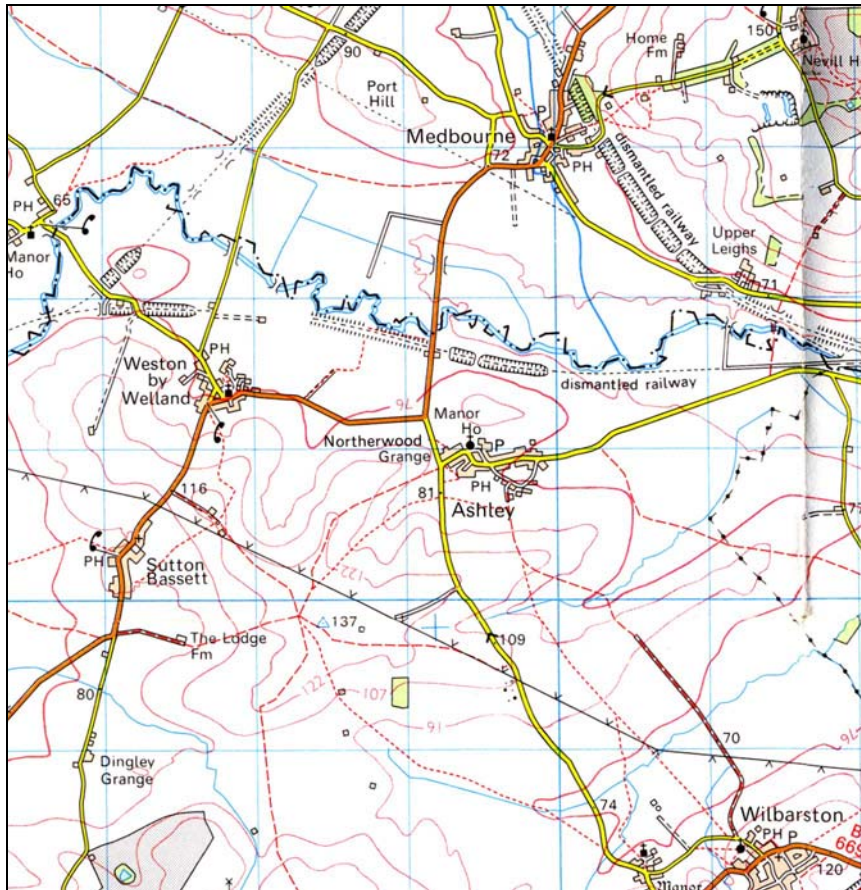


Figure 1. Location of Ashley. Scale 1:50,000

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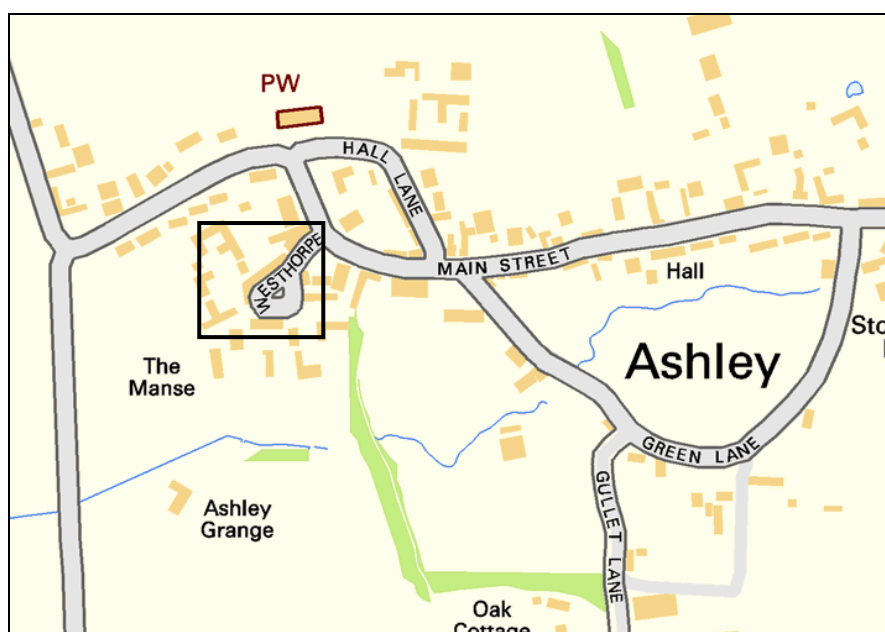


Figure 2. Site location. Not to scale.

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3. Aims and objectives

In accordance with PPS 5 'Planning and the Historic Environment' Policy HE12.3, the purpose of the work was to record and advance understanding of the significance of the affected heritage asset prior to its loss or truncation due to the impact of the proposed development. Although no *Brief* was issued by the Local Planning Authority, guidance for the level of building recording was informed by paragraph 6 of the Listed Building Consent Decision Notice (KET/2010/0750), which requested plans, drawings and photographs of the external elevations and the internal timber structure. It was further indicated by the Planning Officer at Kettering Borough Council that the principal objectives of the work was to provide a record of the tin roof, prior to its removal, in addition to a note of the original roof structure below and the materials used in the early thatch.

4. Methodology

In addition to the recording of the roof covering and supporting timber structure, it was decided on site to carry out a basic photographic survey of the farmhouse interior, to provide a record of the historic building prior to refurbishment, following English Heritage Guidelines *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (2006) to determine the necessary level of recording, as relevant to the impact of the development scheme.

A full set of survey drawings of the existing building, including floor plans, elevations and section drawings have been produced by the client Ms Shaen-Carter. These were verified on site for accuracy and are included as part of the site archive. Block plans derived from the survey drawings have been reproduced as part of this report as a means of locating the photographs taken as part of the field work.

Any additional drawings that were required were made on drafting film at a scale of 1:5, 1:10, 1:20, or 1:50, as appropriate, illustrating particular historic architectural details. These drawings will be transferred to a CAD package and reproduced in the approved format set out in the English Heritage guidelines.

Photographs were taken using a 35mm format SLR camera with black and white print film supplemented by colour digital photographs. The photographic record comprised:

- General views of the building in its setting or landscape
- The building's exterior appearance.
- The overall appearance of the principal internal areas
- Any exterior details which are relevant to the building's design, development and use, and which do not show adequately on the general photographic record
- Internal details structural or decorative relevant to the building's design, development and use.

An initial visit to the site was made on the 30th August 2011 to record the building prior to the removal of the tin roof. Further visits were made on the 6-7th September to record the structure following the removal of the tin cover and the early thatch beneath. The fieldwork was carried out between in September 2011 by Sophie Clarke of ULAS. All work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) Code of Conduct and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures*.

5. Building Description

Westhorpe Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building, with the following listing description, taken from the Images of England website

<http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk/Details/Default.aspx?id=190673&mode=quick> :

ASHLEYWESTHORPESP7990(North side)7/19Westhorpe FarmhouseGVII

ASHLEY WESTHORPE SP7990 (North side) 7/19 Westhorpe Farmhouse GV II House. Probably late C17. Regular coursed ironstone with corrugated metal roof. L-shape lobby-entry plan. Single storey with attic. Main front of 2-window range of C19 casements with glazing bars under wood lintels. C20 door under wood lintel and lean-to hood to far left. Ashlar gable parapet to left and brick stack at ridge. Cross wing breaks forward to right with one-window range of C19 casements to return wall. Interior has open fireplace with bressumer.

A rapid inspection of the interior of the farmhouse confirms the late 17th century construction date for the building, which is of 1 ½ storeys, plus attic, rather than the single storey noted above. The house is L-shaped, with a lobby-entry plan, with the staircase to the first floor, consisting of a straight flight of steps with winders, constructed against the fireplace jambs. The external walls are constructed of regular coursed ironstone; internal cross-walls are also of ironstone, coated in plaster. The southern end bay originally functioned as the service end of the farmhouse. Rooms at all levels of the bay have been plastered and whitewashed

internally, with no evidence of later decoration. A hatch cut has been cut through the first floor, which is encased by early stud walls and there is a pulley wheel set into the stone wall, by which means goods would have been hoisted up to the first floor for storage. At first floor level, the southern bay is divided into two rooms by an early lath and plaster partition wall, with a second floor located above the whole, accessed via a timber stair ladder. The remaining first floor rooms are open to the level of the upper order of purlins, with plaster ceilings over.

The second floor room within the southern service bay is open to the rafters, allowing inspection of the roof structure. The structural roof timbers appear to be of oak and consist of a ridge-piece, which is supported by the southern gable end wall and the internal cross-wall to the north. Beneath the level of the ridge are two orders of side purlins, measuring approximately 15cms or 6 inches square, which are also supported by the cross-walls. On the eastern side, the upper side purlin has a series of notches which have been hand-carved into the timber. These are fairly elaborate and may represent some form of graffiti, or 'doodling' rather than a simple tally. Punched through the plasterwork and resting on top of the purlins, are sections of modern 2 by 4 timbers, which form part of the external structure supporting the tin roof, which is thought to have been constructed during the 1930s. The common rafters are formed of roughly-trimmed ash-poles, of around 5 cms 2 ¼ inch diameter, which are pegged into the backs of the purlins, at intervals of approximately 30cm or 1 foot. The original thatching material appears to consist of bundles of long wheat straw, which are secured to the rafters with twine. Overlying the long straw, the remainder of the roofing thatch consists of Norfolk or water reed.

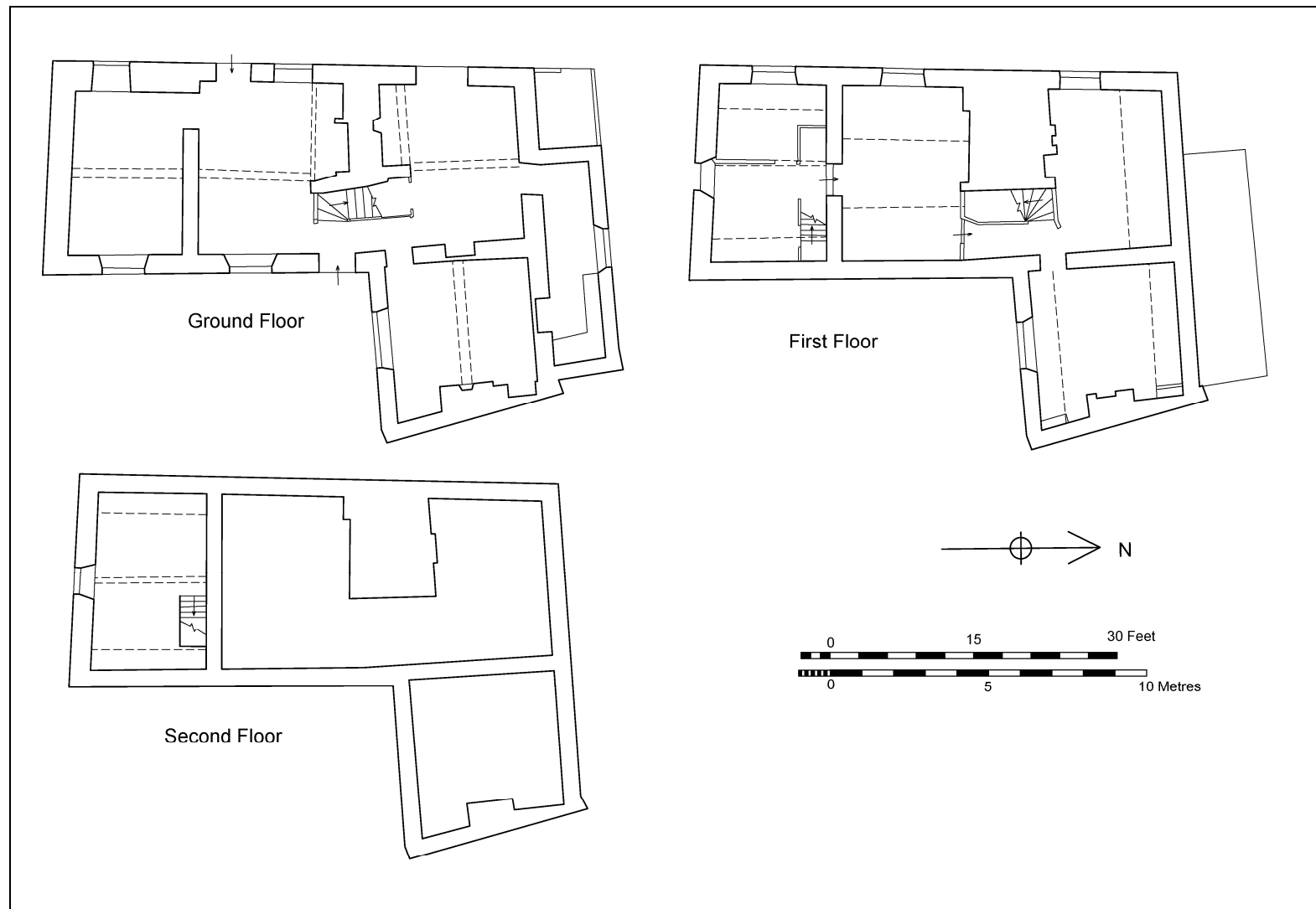


Figure 3. Westhorpe Farmhouse floor plans, derived from survey drawings supplied by Ms. Shaen-Carter.

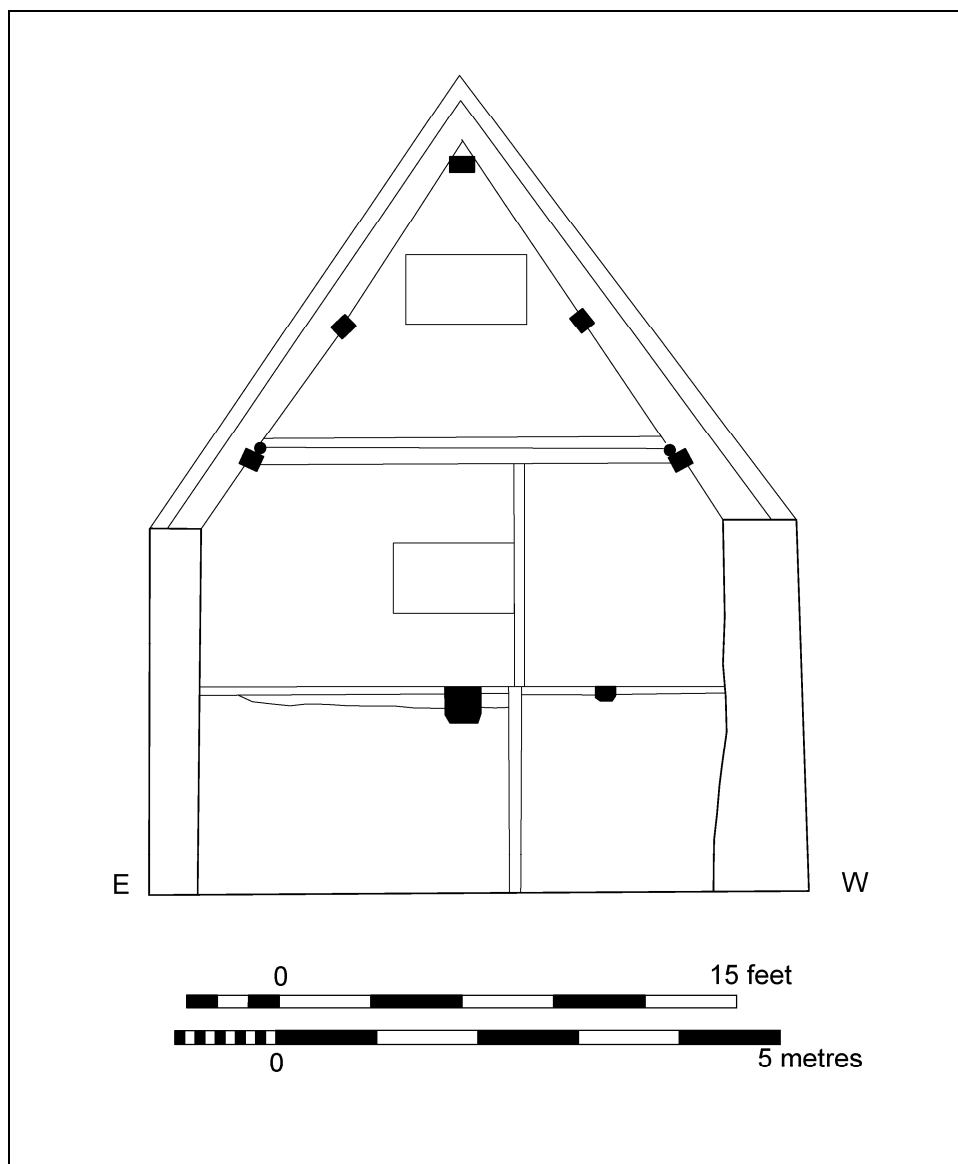


Figure 4. Southern gable end wall, internal elevation.

6. Photographic Record

The following plates have been taken from the photographic archive and are used here to illustrate this report. These have been located on the floor plans reproduced below.

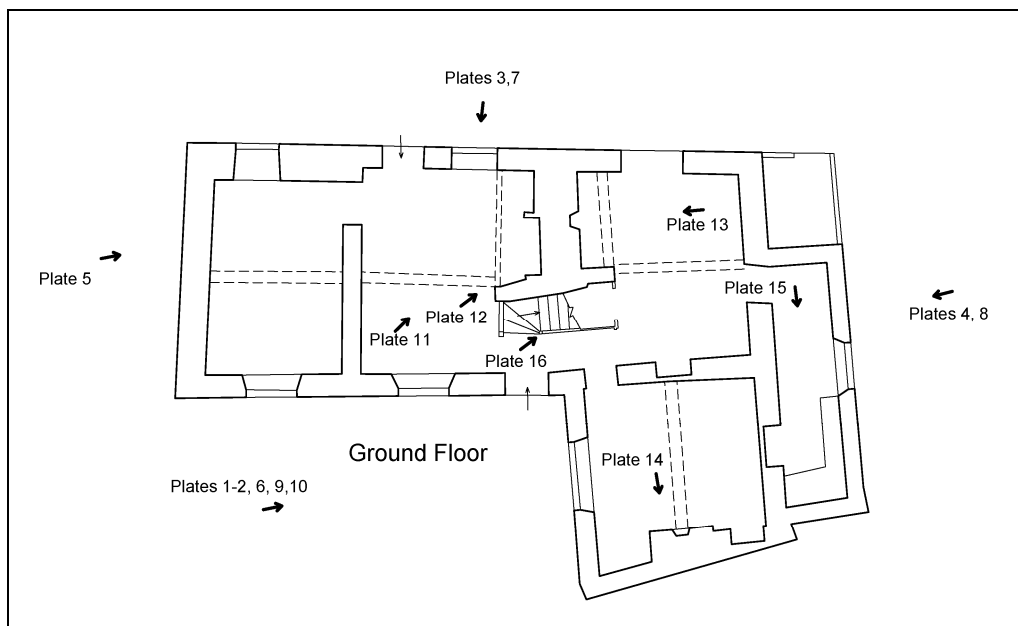


Figure 5. Location of plates 1-16 taken at ground floor level.



Plate 2. Westhorpe farmhouse, frontage elevation, looking north-west.



Plate 3. Rear elevation, looking east.



Plate 4. Looking south.



Plate 5. Southern gable end, looking north.



Plate 6. Frontage, following removal of tin cover.



Plate 7. Rear, during removal of tin cover.



Plate 8. Looking south, during removal of thatch.



Plate 9. Exposed rafters, following removal of thatch.



Plate 10. Detail of above, showing rafters pegged into backs of purlins.



Plate 11. Ground floor living kitchen.



Plate 12. Chamfered axial beam, with scroll stop and steps.



Plate 13. Parlour, with 18th century boxing over 17th century bressumer.



Plate 14. Ground floor reception room, with outline of 18th fireplace visible in plasterwork behind modern replacement. Looking east.



Plate 15. Stone- built lean-to pantry. Looking east.



Plate 16. Timber staircase, probably 18th century. Looking north-west.

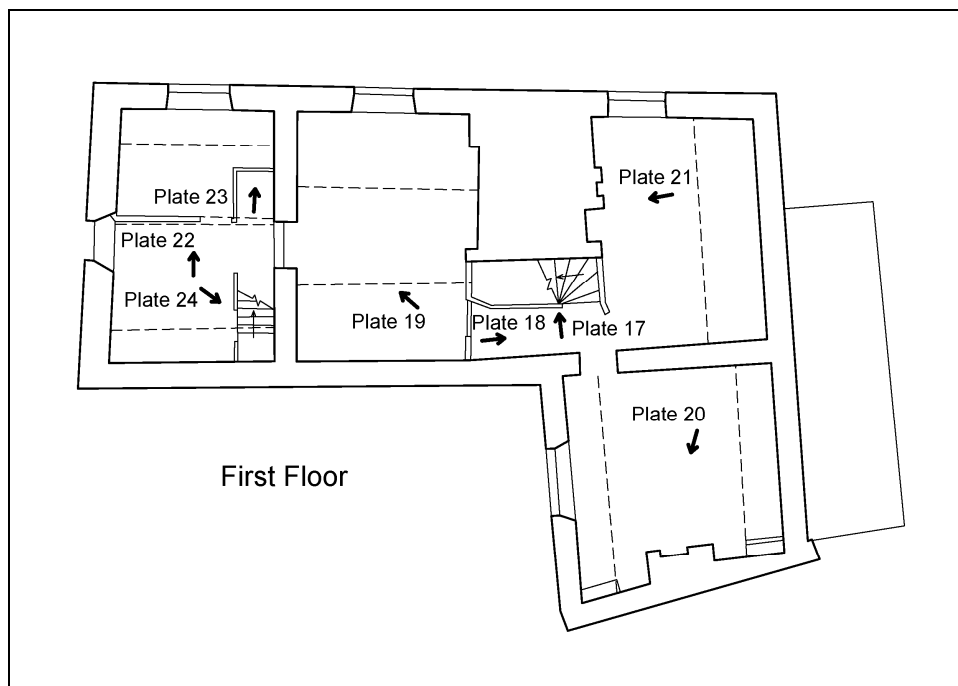


Figure 6. Location of plates 17-24 taken at first floor level.

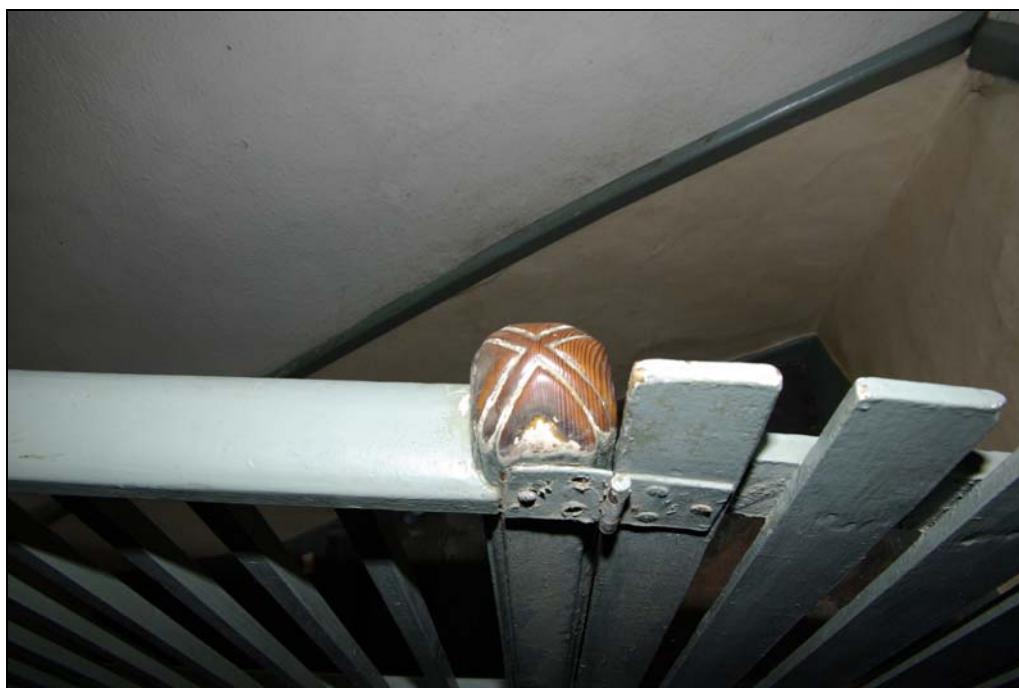


Plate 17. Detail of carved newel, first floor landing.



Plate 18. First floor landing, looking north.



Plate 19. First floor chamber, with two tiers of side purlins visible. Looking south-west.



Plate 20. First floor chamber, looking south-east.



Plate 21. First floor chamber, with 19th century cast-iron fireplace and fitted cupboard with 18th century H-hinges. Looking south.



Plate 22. Southern service end bay, first floor, with early stud partition wall. Looking west.



Plate 23. As above, access hatch in floor, with pulley wheel for hoist located on right-hand side. Looking west.



Plate 24. As 22, boxed-in ladder stair to 2nd floor attic room. Looking north-east.

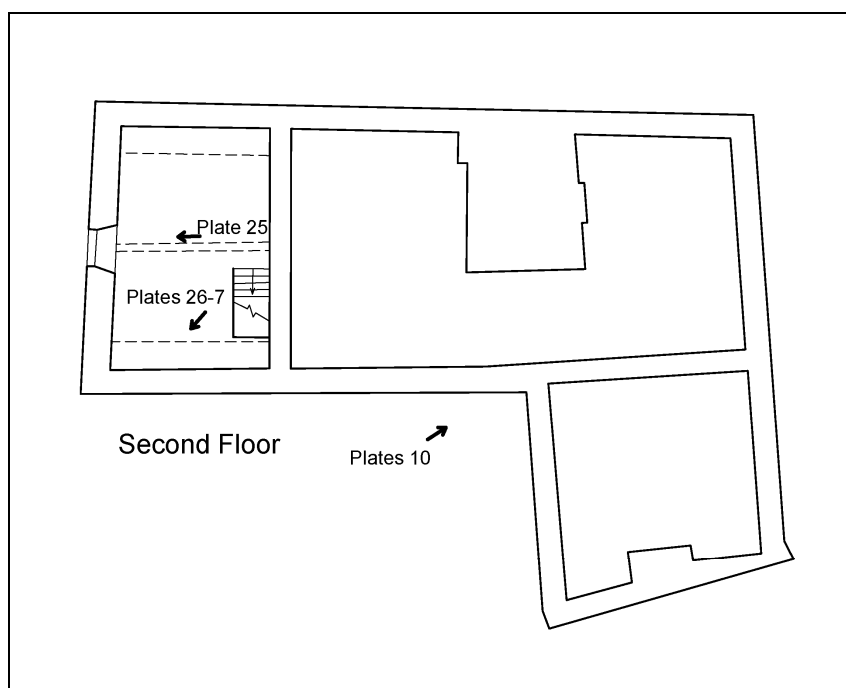


Figure 7. Location of plates 10, 25-27 taken at second floor level.



Plate 25. 2nd floor attic room, looking south.



Plate 26. Detail of roof structure, showing ash-pole rafters with twine ties securing thatch bundles. Looking east.



Plate 27. Detail of notched side-purlin, supporting modern timber, part of the external framework which supports the 20th century tin roof cover. Looking east.

7. Archive

The site archive consists of:

This report

Contact sheets of digital photographs

1cd of digital photographs in .jpg and .tif format

2 contact sheets of black and white 35 mm photographs

35 mm negatives

Index and location plans of archived photographs

Sheets of handwritten notes taken during the survey

Full set of plan and elevation drawings supplied by Mrs S. Shaen-Carter

1 hand drawn elevation drawing of the southern gable wall at 1:50 scale, 1 hand drawn cross-section of the rafters within the roof space on A3 permagraph permatrace drawing paper

The site archive has been allocated a provisional archive code WFAsh_2011 and will be deposited with Northamptonshire County Council in due course.

8. Publication

A record of the project will be submitted to the Archaeological Data Service's (ADS) OASIS project. Oasis is an online index to archaeological grey literature reports.

A version of the summary will be submitted to the local archaeological journal *Northamptonshire Archaeology*.

9. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was undertaken by Sophie Clarke and the project was managed by Patrick Clay. The original survey drawings were supplied by Mrs S. Shaen-Carter.

10. Bibliography

English Heritage 2006 *Understanding Historic Buildings. A guide to good recording practice*. London: English Heritage

Hall, L. 2005 *Period House Fixtures and Fittings 1300-1900* Newbury: Countryside Books

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19.09.2011

Appendix I. Original survey drawings supplied by Mrs Shaen-Carter.



