



University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

**An Historic Building Survey (Level 2)
of Gardens Cottage, Home Farm,
Rockingham Castle, Northamptonshire.**

NGR: SP 8689 9105

Andrew Hyam



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Rockingham Castle, Northamptonshire**

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For: Corporate Architecture Limited

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Summary

An English Heritage Level 2 historic building survey was undertaken by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) at Gardens Cottage, Home Farm, Rockingham Castle on the 5th of October 2012. The survey studied the early 20th century brick-built cottage attached to the walled garden which forms part of Home Farm. Gardens Cottage was first built with two ground floor and two first floor rooms with a single storey outhouse or store on its north-eastern side. The cottage has had only one significant rebuilding phase which took place in the late 1950s or early 1960s when the outhouse was converted into a kitchen and utility room and two extra first floor bedrooms were added on the floor above.

Introduction

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 12 Enhancing and Conserving the Historic Environment, this document forms the report for an historic buildings survey at Gardens Cottage, Home Farm, Rockingham Castle, Northamptonshire. The early 20th century cottage forms part of the Home Farm complex within the Rockingham Castle estate. The whole area covering the castle, park and gardens are noted in the Grade II* listing (entry number 1001038) although Gardens Cottage is conspicuous in its absence from the description referring to the walled garden and its surroundings.

As part of a scheme of improvement and redevelopment of the walled garden attached to Gardens Cottage it is intended that the cottage building be extensively renovated and modernised. In response to the proposals, which would result in the loss of some of the original fabric of the building it was requested by Corby Borough Council that the applicant submit an historic buildings survey at a suitable level to provide a descriptive record of the current state of the building, in this case a Level 2 survey was specified. A Level 2 survey was first defined in *RCHME Recording Historic Buildings – a Descriptive Specification* (1996) and has since been superseded by English Heritage guidance – *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (2006). Under the redevelopment programme it is intended that many of the existing ground floor internal wall will be removed as will much of the existing south-west outside wall. The assessment has been prepared by A R Hyam of University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) Historic Buildings Team, on behalf of the client, Corporate Architecture Limited.

Rockingham Castle is located on a long ridge to the south of the village of Rockingham and is approximately 1km to the north of Corby (Fig. 1). Home Farm, which includes Gardens Cottage and the walled garden, lies to the south-west of the

castle buildings (Fig. 2). Gardens Cottage is built into the north-eastern corner of the walled garden and to the south-west of a large modern open barn.

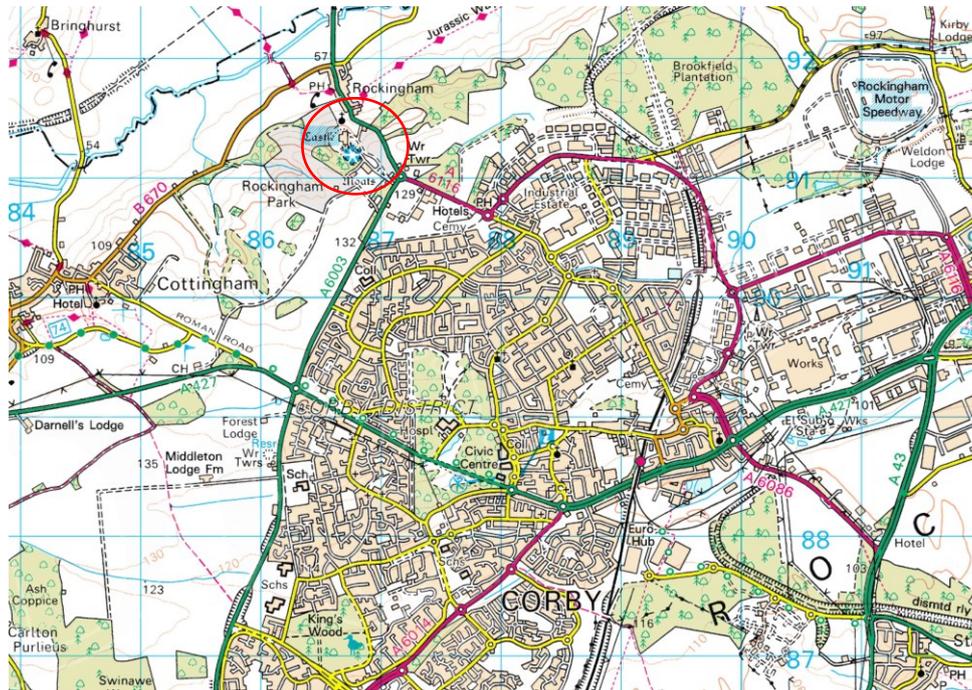


Figure 1. Rockingham Castle location

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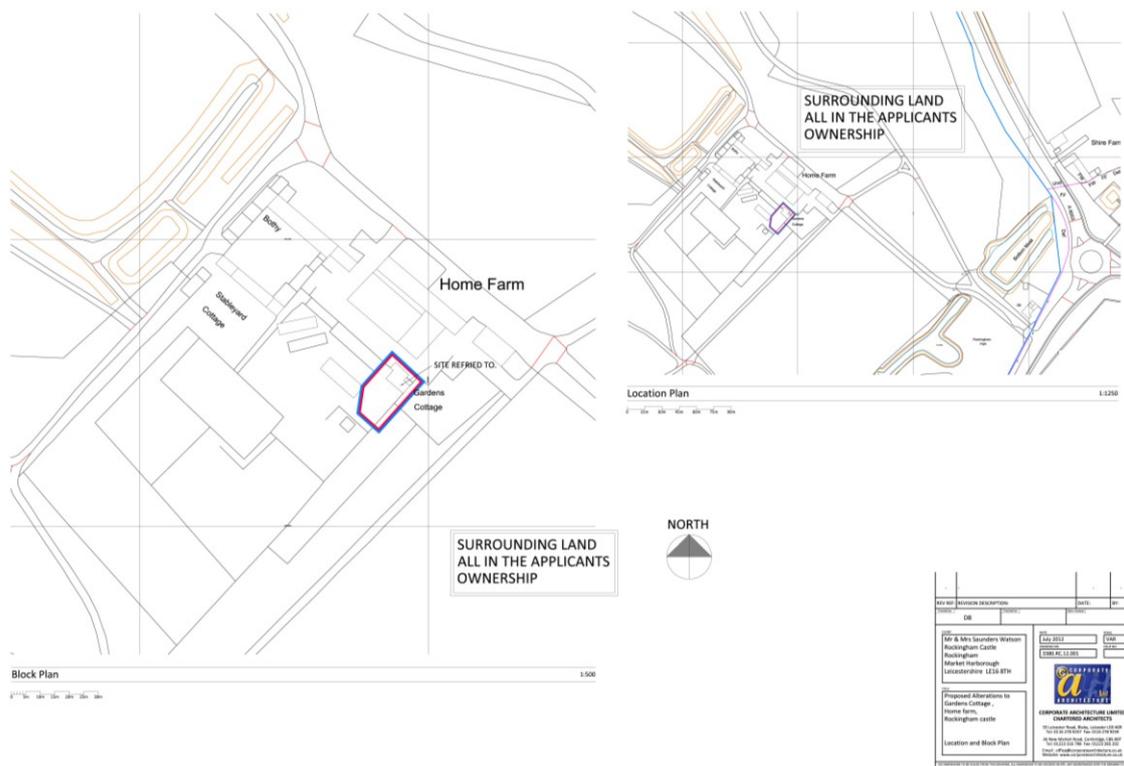


Figure 2. Site location
Plan supplied by Corporate Architecture Ltd

Background

The original Rockingham Castle was built by William I and was subsequently used by a number of kings and queens until the 15th century by which time it appears to have fallen into a state of disrepair. In 1544 Edward Watson obtained the lease for the castle and began a rebuilding campaign which continued up to the time of the English Civil War. After the war large parts of the castle were demolished, including the keep. Later rebuilding and modifications continued until Richard Watson, youngest son of the third Earl Sondes commenced a major programme of refurbishment in 1836. It would appear that the walled kitchen garden might well have been part of this overall scheme as the walls were constructed in about 1840.

The earliest available Ordnance Survey map is the 1886 First Edition County Series which shows that Gardens Cottage at this time has not yet been built. The walled garden is present as are the stables set around a courtyard attached to the north-western corner of the garden. The next edition in 1900 shows the same situation with the north-eastern corner of the garden, where Gardens Cottage will be built, still remaining clear. Unfortunately there is a fairly large gap in time and the next available map is from 1938 by which time the cottage has appeared. On this map it has a much smaller footprint than its present form and has a similar sized structure attached to its south-eastern facing elevation. There is also the indication of a small structure being attached to the north-east facing elevation although the precise details are not clear (Fig. 3). The 1964 edition shows the next significant changes when the building attached to the south-eastern corner has disappeared and a new extension has been added to the north-east facing elevation (Fig. 4). This appears to show the building as it remains today. This edition is also the first map to show the name of Gardens Cottage.

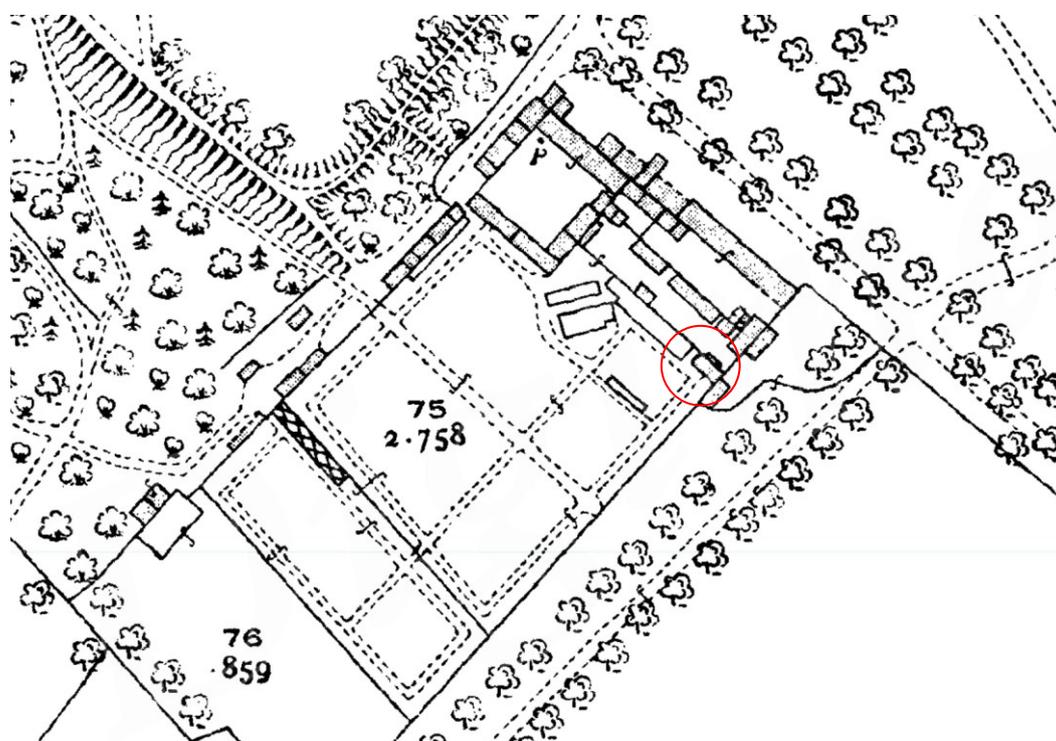


Figure 3. 1938 Ordnance Survey map of site

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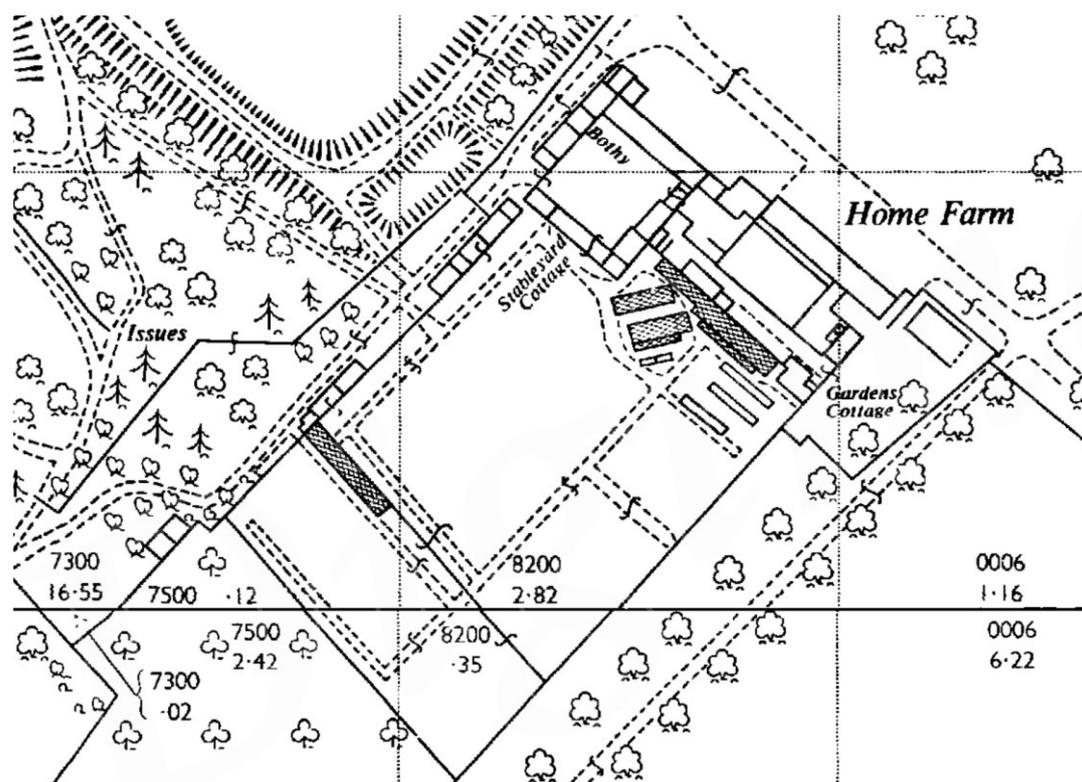


Figure 4. 1964 Ordnance Survey map of site

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The cottage, as noted, lies at the north-east corner of the walled garden which slopes downwards towards the south-west. The garden has a large tennis court near to the centre and is currently being remodelled to include a swimming pool close to the south-west of Gardens Cottage. Because of the slope the garden has evidence of a number of shallow terraces separated by linear paths. To the north-west are a number of ironstone built stables and cottages of early 19th century origin. To the north and north-east of the cottage are a modern, concrete-built, open barn and a number of other agricultural buildings (Fig. 5).

Objectives

The objectives of the historic building survey were:

- To record by photography the building with specific attention given to those elements proposed for demolition, conversion and/or alteration. This work to be undertaken to a standard that will allow the future interpretation of the building within the context for which it was originally designed and which subsequently evolved.
- To produce an archive and report of the results.



Figure 5. Gardens Cottage seen from the east
Looking south-west

Methodology

Black and white 35mm photographs and digital colour photographs were taken throughout the survey. Notes and sketches were also made and scale drawings supplied by Corporate Architecture Limited were used and modified to suit the purposes of this survey. The specific levels of detail used in the Level 2 survey followed the guidelines laid down in the RCHME (1996) and English Heritage (2006) specification, which were:

1. The Written Account:

- The precise location of the building, by name or street number, civil parish, town, etc, and National Grid reference and details of listing or scheduling.
- The date when the record was made, and the name(s) of the recorder(s).
- A statement describing the building's plan, form, function, age and development sequence. The names of architects, builders, patrons and owners should be given if known.
- An account of the building's overall form (structure, materials, layout) and its successive phases of development, together with the evidence supporting this analysis.
- An account of past and present uses of the building and its parts, with the evidence for these interpretations. An analysis of any circulation pattern or decorative, iconographic or liturgical scheme.

2. Drawn Record:

- Shall comprise plans (to scale or full dimensioned) of all main floors as existing. Small buildings of well-known types, or buildings with a repetitive structure (e.g.

many industrial buildings) may be planned on one floor only, but a note or a sketch plan should be made to show the arrangement of other floors. Plans should show the form and location of any structural features of historic significance (e.g. blocked doors and windows; former fireplace openings; masonry joints; changes in internal levels).

- As a minimum, in all cases, the drawn record will include a sketch plan roughly dimensioned (when no more thorough drawn record is required). Such a plan may not always include structural details (e.g. timber framing).
- In each of the above cases, use may be made of available plans (i.e. those prepared as part of a planning application). In all cases these shall be checked by the historic building specialist and supplemented or amended where necessary.

3. Photographic Record:

- General view of views of the exterior of the building.
- The overall appearance of principal rooms and circulation areas.
- Detailed coverage of the building's external appearance. In the case of a building designed by an architect, or intended to be seen from a certain point of view, it is important to have regard to the builder's intentions and to record the effect of the design or of the building's placing.

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*.

Results

Gardens Cottage is a two-storey brick-built house with gable ends to the north-west and south-east elevations. The roof has a shallow pitch on the north-east elevation and a steeper, shorter, pitch on the south-west side. Initial inspection clearly shows two main phases of construction with the northern half of the building being built of bricks which appear to date from the second half of the 20th century. The southern half of the building appears to have used an earlier 20th century brick. This is discussed in more detail below. Corporate Architecture Limited has produced a set of elevations and plans of the cottage and has designated names for each room which this survey has continued to use (Figs. 6 and 7).



Figure 6. Elevations of Gardens Cottage.
Modified from Corporate Architecture Ltd drawing 3380.RC.12.004

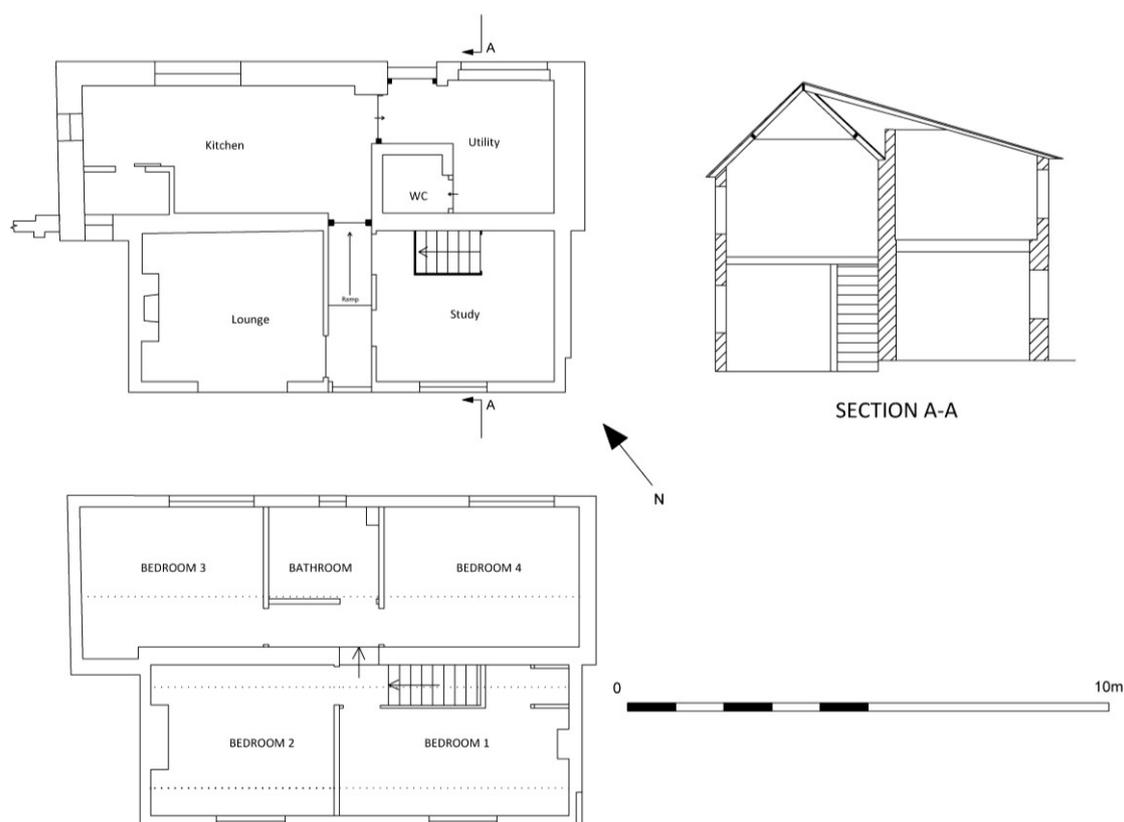


Figure 7. Plans of Gardens Cottage
Modified from Corporate Architecture Ltd drawing 3380.RC.12.002

Outside

North-east facing elevation

The north-east facing elevation faces towards the modern barn and is partially obscured by it. Dark purple-red bricks which appear to date to the later 20th century are laid in a stretcher bond on this elevation (Fig. 8). The bricks measure 215mm long by 64mm high by 104mm wide. Cement roof tiles which also date to the later 20th century cover the shallow (approximately 15° slope). The rainwater goods are all of grey plastic and are consistent with the age of the brickwork and roof. The windows are plain undecorated wooden framed with flat lintels which presumably hide RSJs. The deeply recessed front door is off-centre to match the internal room layout and is made from plain wooden boards. The chimney stacks set at each gable end are brick built and are of an early 20th century brick. There is no evidence of any blocked or modified openings on this elevation.



Figure 8. North-east facing elevation
Looking south-west. 1m scale

South-east facing elevation

The division between the two types of brick can clearly be seen on this and on the north-west facing elevation (Fig 9). On the south side the bricks appear to date to the first half of the 20th century and are laid in an English bond in the gable end and halfway down the first floor level. The bricks measure 230mm long by 75mm high by 102mm wide. Below this the brickwork has been disturbed and is built in a partial English bond with courses of headers at random courses rather than alternating with courses of stretchers. This area also appears to have been previously covered by another structure and may relate to the building shown on the 1938 OS map in Figure 3. A recessed and corbelled corner at the top of ground floor level on the southern corner may also be associated with this now removed structure.

The northern half of this elevation is built from the same later 20th century bricks as found on the north-east facing elevation. There are no apparent modifications to this part of the wall although the upper courses are of a slightly redder brick than on the lower courses. This portion of the building steps out from the southern half by 0.29m. The gable end between the two building phases has been filled in with modern brickwork to continue the new and shallow roofline of the northern half of the building. As noted, the chimney stack dates to the earlier phase of building.

The garden wall extended from the southern corner of the elevation although part of this has been temporarily removed for rebuilding due to stability issues. The heights of the cottage brickwork courses do not quite match those of the garden wall although some attempt has been made to key the two structures together.



Figure 9. South-east facing elevation
Looking north-west. 1m scale

North-west facing section

The north-west facing elevation exhibits the same two building phases as located on the south-east facing elevation although in this case the later build extends out beyond the earlier phase by approximately 1.5m (Figs. 10 and 11). The garden wall butts up against the later phase of cottage wall. A small wooden-framed window at ground floor level matches those on the north-eastern facing elevation.

South-west facing elevation

The south-west facing elevation looks out down the slope into the walled garden. It is built using early 20th century red bricks laid in an English Bond to match that found on the older phases of the north-west and south-east elevations and on the garden wall (Fig. 12). It has ceramic roof tiles which do not appear to be as old as the brickwork. Later internal inspection of the roof structure shows that the tiles bear the stamped name of ROSEMARY which is a make of tile which continues to be used to the present day. The windows are modern double-glazed and have wooden frames but retain their original flat wooden lintels which have a stop chamfer on each. A recently removed conservatory has left a large opening on the western side which has a temporary board covering the hole. The door has also been replaced by a temporary board.

The later phase extension extends north-westwards by approximately 1.5m as noted above. It has a single deeply recessed metal framed window at ground floor level which lights a small pantry in the kitchen.



Figure 10. North-west facing elevation to north of garden wall
Looking south-east. 1m scale



Figure 11. North-west facing elevation to south of garden wall
Looking east. 1m scale



Figure 12. South-west facing elevation
Looking north-east. 1m scale

Inside - Ground Floor

As mentioned, the names of each room are those used in the original architectural drawings (see Fig. 7).

Utility Room

The utility room is entered from the outside doorway on the north-east facing elevation or from a doorway leading from the kitchen. It has a concrete-floor with exposed lime-washed bricks which are of the same size as those used in the earlier phase portion of the cottage (Fig.13). There is a small brick-built structure, currently used as a toilet, in the south-west corner made of the same bricks and which has a chamfered lintel. There are no signs of any blocked windows or openings on the south-west wall. Around the window on the north-eastern wall is a step which shows that the wall consists of an inner skin of original bricks with an outer skin of new bricks and breezeblocks. This would account for the unusually thick wall on this phase of the cottage.



Figure 13. Utility Room
Looking north. 1m scale

Kitchen

As with the Utility Room the kitchen has very thick outer walls although there is no telltale stepping around the windows to indicate that an earlier wall has been re-skinned (Fig. 14). Again there is no evidence of any blocked windows into the earlier phased part of the cottage although the kitchen walls are plastered so that this evidence would be obscured. A pantry built from breeze-blocks fills the western corner.

A doorway in the south corner leads out of the kitchen to a small ramp and central corridor running between the lounge and study of the southern rooms. A door, constructed from 6¹/₂ inch (166mm) wide boards, on the east side leads into a small storage space under the stairs. This space has since been opened out to make the study slightly larger. Two other doors lead to the east and west lead to the lounge and study.



Figure 14. Kitchen
Looking south-east. 1m scale

Lounge

The lounge is a small rectangular room with plastered and wallpapered walls and a boarded over entrance on the south-west wall where a conservatory was recently demolished (Fig. 15). The chimney breast is plain with opening a 0.54m wide opening but no traces of any internal fireplace fittings remain. The door to the centre corridor appears to be original and is made from 6¹/₂ inch wide tongue and groove boards. The floor covering is modern laminate flooring which appears to be laid on concrete.

Study

The study is the same size as the lounge but has the enclosed staircase in the north corner (Figs. 16 and 17). The main doorway into the room from the corridor appears to be of 1940s or 1950s origin but the doorway underneath the stairs, as noted above, is made from tongue and groove boards and is probably original. The stairs are enclosed by the same style of tongue and groove boards and would have run from floor to ceiling when first built. At some stage the boards below stair height have been removed to create a slightly larger room. There is a board door at the bottom of the staircase.

On the east wall is a sloping masonry projection at ceiling height (Fig. 17). This acts as a support for the single flue chimney breast in the first floor bedroom. It seems likely that this used to continue down to floor level and would also have had a fireplace.



Figure 15. Lounge
Looking south. 1m scale



Figure 16. Study
Looking north

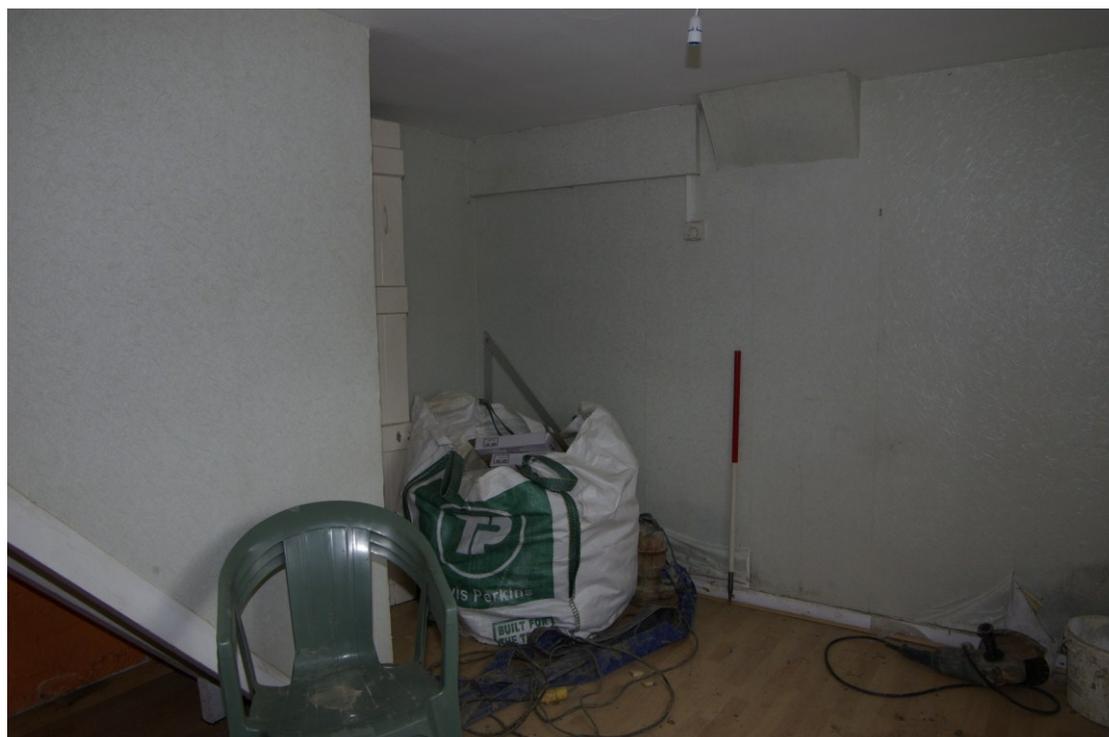


Figure 17. Study and truncated chimney
Looking east. 1m scale

Inside – First Floor

The first floor is reached from the stairs in the Study up to a small landing which is built against the north-east wall of Bedroom 1.

Bedroom 1

The stairs along the north-east wall of Bedroom 1 make this room a slightly awkward shape (Figs. 18 and 19). In order to gain more height the ceiling is built against the first purlin height creating a sloping angle against both outside walls. To compensate for the loss of space caused by the staircase this bedroom is slightly longer than Bedroom 2. The chimney breast has no evidence of a blocked fireplace which suggests that it once extended down to ground floor level and to a ground floor fireplace. The windows are modern replacements and look out into the walled garden (Fig. 20). The door to the small landing is a replacement and matches that seen in the ground floor study.

A small hatch in the ceiling gives limited access into the roof space. The first phase of roof structure is relatively simple with the purlins being attached to the underside of the common rafters which join at the top against a narrow ridge. When the new extension was added to the north-east side of the cottage it would appear that the tiles on the north-east side were removed and replaced by new common rafters set at a new and shallow angle to cover the new build (Fig. 21).



Figure 18. Bedroom 1
Looking south-east. 1m scale



Figure 19. Bedroom 1
Looking north. 1m scale



Figure 20. Walled garden seen from Bedroom 1
Looking west



Figure 21. Roof structure
Looking north-west. Original phase on left, later extension roof on right

Bedroom 2

Bedroom 2 was the principal bedroom of the original cottage and as such has a fireplace on the north-west wall which is currently partially covered by modern wardrobes (Fig. 22). It has plastered and papered walls making it difficult to see any evidence of any blocked windows on the north-east wall. The door is still the original 6¹/₂ inch (166mm) board door and the floorboards are flat boards of approximately 170mm width.



Figure 22. Bedroom 2
Looking west. 1m scale

Bedroom 3

Bedrooms 3 and 4 and the bathroom are reached by an opening which has been knocked through what was once the outside, north-east, wall to get to a small landing outside the central bathroom. All three rooms have a partial sloping ceiling created by the shallow angle of the new roof. None of the bedrooms have chimney breasts.

Bedroom 3 is quite plain in detail with a modern wood-framed window and a modern hardboard covered door which has a glass door light over it to light an otherwise unlit landing (Fig. 23). The floor is covered in chipboard sheet which may or may not cover earlier boards. The walls on this floor are only a single skin of brickwork rather than the very thick walls seen on the ground floor. Because of this, and because the new brickwork sits outside the earlier brickwork, there is a small step in the south-west wall in the corner where the later extension extends beyond the edge of the original cottage (see plan in Figure 7).



Figure 23. Bedroom 3
Looking south-east. 1m scale

Bedroom 4

Bedroom 4 is identical in shape and style to Bedroom 3 with the exception of the small step in the south-west wall (Fig. 24). The only exception being that this room has a modern stripped pine door.

Bathroom

As noted the modern bathroom is located between Bedrooms 3 and 4 (Fig. 25). It is tiled and plastered making close inspection of the construction details difficult.



Figure 24. Bedroom 4
Looking north-west towards landing. 1m scale



Figure 25. Bathroom
Looking north. 1m scale

Discussion

Gardens Cottage is clearly built in two key phases, the first being the two-up/two-down portion on the south-western half of the cottage. Cartographic evidence can only give a date for the initial construction as being between 1900 and 1938. The style of building, the brickwork and overall layout however seem likely to point towards the earlier date rather than to the 1930s. Rockingham Estate records can probably help pinpoint the exact date. When first built, the four-roomed cottage also appears to have had a single storey outhouse or store built onto its north-east side. Whatever the function of this was it does not appear to have been used as a dwelling given the lack of fireplaces and bare brick walls etc. The bricks appear to have been chosen to match those used in the existing walled garden and care was also taken to try and match the bond used.

The next significant phase is the incorporation into the main house of the single storey outbuilding. This was achieved by adding an outer skin of modern bricks around the existing structure and creating a new kitchen and utility room along with a first floor for two new bedrooms and an inside bathroom. The roofline was also altered significantly by the fairly simple act of adding new common rafters to alter the pitch of the new roof. Again, the exact date of this is not clear from the Ordnance Survey maps which only show it in place by 1964. The bricks are certainly of post World War II date and appear to be of later 1950s or very early 1960s manufacture. Possibly because the new extension was facing out onto a rather utilitarian barn and agricultural area little attempt seems to have been taken to match the two phases of brickwork resulting in a rather unbalanced looking building.

Other modifications to the house, which might be contemporary with the second phase redesign, include the removal of the fireplace and chimneybreast in the ground floor room now used as the study. The opening out of the space under the stairs probably happened at this time too.

The proposal includes a sympathetic extension to the Garden Cottage which will be retained. This will not have a significant detrimental effect on the building itself which is of local importance. In the light of the works that have already been carried out within the walled garden, there will be a minor adverse impact on the setting of the Castle and its environs but not of such magnitude that would preclude the extension being constructed.

Archive

The archive consists of:

This report,

Contact sheet of 55 digital photographs,

Contact sheet of 55 35mm black and white photographs and negatives,

Handwritten notes made during the survey,

CD of this report and the digital photographs.

Publication

A summary of the results of the project will be submitted to the local archaeological journal, *Northamptonshire Archaeology*.

A record of the project will also be submitted to the OASIS project. OASIS is an online index to archaeological grey literature.

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