

**A Building Survey and Watching Brief  
in advance of redevelopment at  
17 Northgate, Oakham, Rutland  
(SK 8585 0895)**

**Jon Coward**

**For Francis W. Keyworth on behalf of Mrs Joyce Wells**

**Planning Apps 2002/1093/9 & 2003/0061/9**

**Checked by Project Manager**

**Signed: .....Date:.....**

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## **A Building Survey and Watching Brief in advance of redevelopment at 17 Northgate, Oakham, Rutland (SK8585 0895)**

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### ***1 Summary***

*A building survey and watching brief was carried out by ULAS in 2003 for Francis W Keyworth, Chartered Architects on behalf of Mrs Joyce Wells at 17 Northgate, Oakham, Rutland (SK 8585 0895) in advance of redevelopment and alterations. No archaeological deposits or finds were noted in the course of the watching brief. The archive will be deposited with Historic and Natural Environment Team, County Hall, Glenfield, Leicester.*

### **2. Introduction**

This document reports a buildings survey and watching brief survey at 17 Northgate, Oakham, Rutland (SK 8585 0895: fig 1). The application comprises the erection of a double garage, construction of one and two-storey extensions to the rear (north) elevation, and the demolition of outbuildings and single storey extension. The requirements for building survey and watching brief are detailed in the letter of 13.05.03 from Leicestershire County Council Heritage Services; the building survey was undertaken to RCHME level 2 standard (RCHME, 3rd edition 1996). Unfortunately, part of the property had already been demolished, and new footings constructed, in advance of the survey and watching brief. One short stretch of footing was subsequently inspected in advance of concreting.

### **3 Methodology**

The photographic survey was undertaken with monochrome negative film and colour slide film rated at 400ASA, using 35mm format SLR cameras. For the purposes of this report, selected images were scanned and manipulated in Photoshop Elements software. The drawn record is based on the developer's plans, annotated by the author. The survey followed the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Code of Conduct*, and *Standards and Guidance for Standing Building Surveys and Archaeological Watching Briefs*.

### **4 Watching Brief**

Only the west wall footing for a new garage was inspected (fig 2). This showed *c.* 0.50m of garden soil with ceramic building material fragments, under which was *c.* 1.2m of greyish clay substratum, which appeared to have been disturbed. No archaeological deposits or finds were observed.

### **5 Description of the building**

The building fronts onto Northgate, Oakham (fig 3). It is listed as Grade 2. The listing description describes it as 'mid C17 house, 1-storey and attics. Coursed rubble. Reed thatch...'

The building appears to be of three bay construction, with a central stack and two further stacks at either end. The east gable (figs 4,5) shows that the stack has been inserted, necessitating moving the first floor window to the north side. It appears from this gable that the roof may have been raised, perhaps converting attic space into a first floor proper; however the only evidence for this at the front is that the mortar in the top few courses appears to be a slightly different colour than that beneath. The rear elevation (fig 6) at ground level shows the installation of a large 20th century window looking out into the rear garden.

A range of single storey outbuildings to the northeast has been demolished with the exception of the coursed stone east wall (fig 7). A small rectangular flat roofed extension in the junction of the cross range and main building has also been demolished. Judging by a photograph of the small extension it was certainly late 20th century. The long range was obviously earlier; whereas the extant east elevation is stone, an unclear photograph of the west elevation shows a stone lean-to at the north end, but brick to the south. This range may have originally been built as an open fronted barn or carhouse, subsequently infilled.

In plan, the house appears to be of cross passage type, with one bay to the east and two to the west. On the ground floor the two west bays have been knocked through to form a single large room (fig 8). A slim transverse run of boxing (presumably covering a modern RSJ supporting the original longitudinal beam) probably indicates the position of the removed wall. Few original features survive in this area, except the full size main fireplace (fig 9) on the east wall with a later freestanding stove grate, a wall cupboard in the south wall, and the longitudinal chamfered beam itself. The fireplace on the west wall has been completely remodelled.

In the east bay, a thin partition with a small four light window separates the cross passage (fig 11) from the room (fig 10). A large stopped and chamfered longitudinal beam runs from the back of the central stack across the passage, through the partition, and under the joists to terminate in a slightly awkward buttress arrangement (fig 12) on the gable wall (presumably connected with the insertion of the stack). The joists in the northeast corner (fig 12) show a possible position of former access into the loft area. There is a cupboard in the north wall.

On the first floor is an unusual layout of three bedrooms, a bathroom, a landing and a large lobby. The bathroom is completely modern and has been created by dividing the east room with a partition. The west and central rooms have a bedroom grate and built in cupboard. The hob grate in the central bedroom (fig 13) appears to be of Pantheon pattern, and along with the cupboard door latch adjacent, could be as early as the 18th century. The east chamber (fig 14) appears only to have the chimney without any obvious provision for a fireplace.

The roof space (figs 15-18) was accessible only in the central bay; none of the structure east of the central stack was visible. The roof type is not common in Leicestershire; the structure is of clasped purlin form, with the principal rafter trusses at the bay intervals carrying side purlins. Sub-collars on the principal rafter trusses support a square-set ridge purlin. The first floor ceiling beams are joined to the common rafters, effectively functioning as collars.

The roof timbers are relatively insubstantial with many of the common rafters being trimmed roundwood poles; the principal rafter trusses are converted timbers of slightly heavier scantling.

## 6 Archive

The archive consists of:

2 sheets of photocopied photographs from the Architects showing views of the property in advance of redevelopment

2 sheets of monochrome negatives

2 sheets of monochrome contact prints

28 colour transparencies

1 *pro forma* watching brief form

1 architects plan with annotations

1 printout of fig showing location of watching brief

It will deposited with Leicestershire County Council Heritage Services in due course.

## 7 Acknowledgements

Project management was by Patrick Clay. Neil Finn advised on the roof structure. ULAS would like to thank Mr and Mrs Wells and Francis W. Keyworth for their assistance.

## 8 Sources

Linda Hall and N.W. Alcock 2002 *Fixtures and fittings in dated houses 1567 - 1763*. Council for British Archaeology Practical Handbooks in Archaeology 11

David J Eveleigh 1992 *Fire grates and kitchen ranges* Shire Album 99

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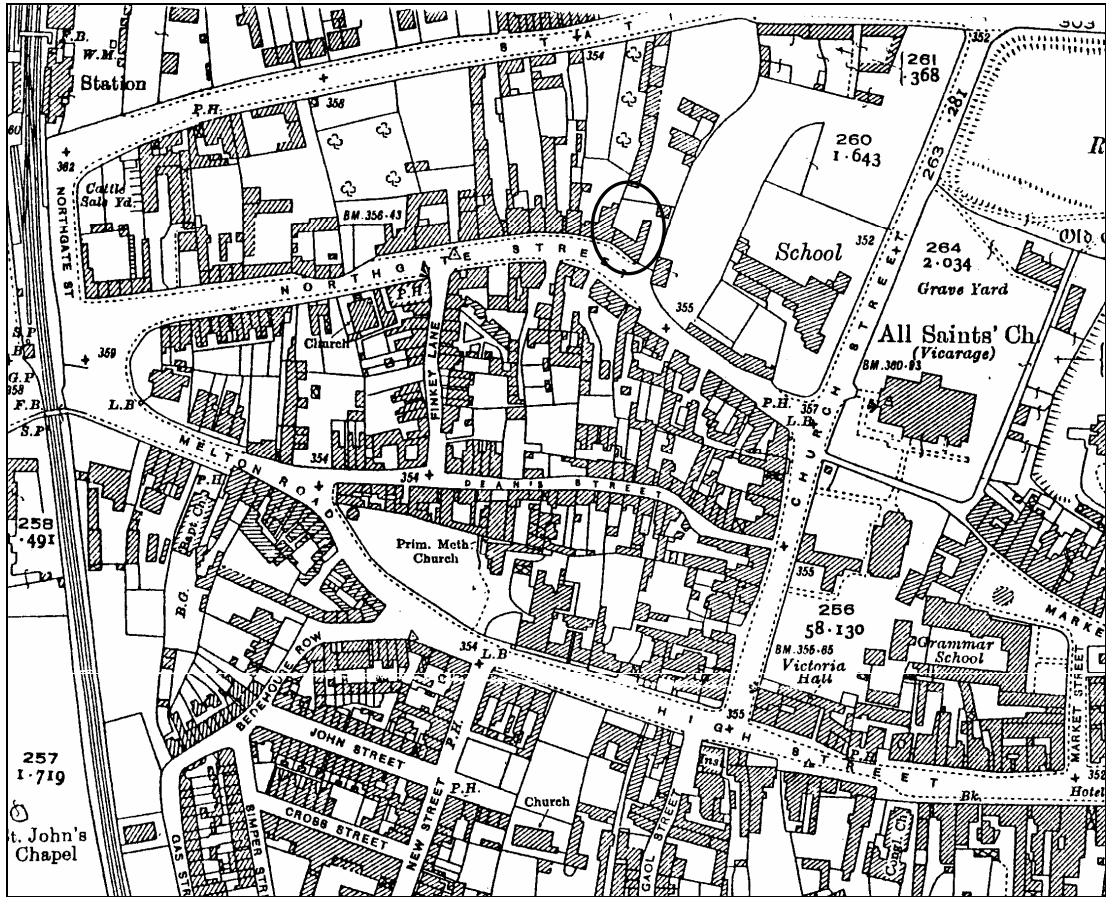


Figure 1 Location map of the area. NTS. Site within oval. Taken from 1:1250 Ordnance Survey map © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100021186

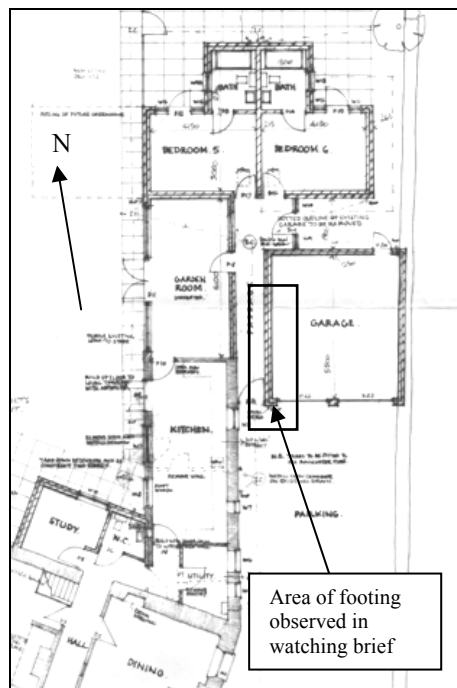


Fig 2 Plan of area observed during the watching brief. Taken from plan supplied by Architects.



Fig 3 Frontage, looking north





Fig 4 Front and gable, looking northwest



Fig 5 Gable, looking west



Fig 6 Rear, looking south



Fig 7 East wall of outbuildings, looking southwest



Fig 8 West and central bays, ground floor, looking east



Fig 9 Central bay fireplace, ground floor, looking east



Fig 10 East bay, ground floor, looking westnorthwest



Fig 11 Passage, ground floor, looking south



Fig 12 East bay, ground floor, looking north



Fig 13 First floor central bay, looking east





Fig 14 First floor east bay, looking east



Fig 15 View into roof space from first floor landing



Fig 16 Roof space from central bay looking west



Fig 17 Roof space from central bay looking west-southwest



Fig 18 Roof space from central bay looking southwest