



UNIVERSITY OF
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Archaeological Services

**Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording,
Analysis and Publication and Historic Building Recording at
Fermyn Woods Hall,
Causin Way, Brigstock,
Northamptonshire
NGR: SP 95816 87120**



**ULAS Report No. 2022-029
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Site Name: Fermyn Woods Hall, Causin Way, Brigstock,
Northamptonshire.

Grid Ref: SP 95816 87120

Author: Andrew Hyam

Client: James Broadbent

Planning Ref. NE/21/00453/LBC

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	Current Land Use	Residence		
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	Significant Finds/Period	19th century and later		
	Reason for Investigation	NPPF		
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Planning Ref.	NE/21/00453/LBC			
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CONTENTS

Summary	1
Introduction.....	1
Site Location, Geology and Topography	1
Building Proposals	4
Historical Background	6
Objectives	8
Methodology	8
Results.....	9
Conclusion	20
Acknowledgements.....	20
References and Sources	21
Appendix 1 Digital Photographs taken during the survey	22
Appendix 2 Photograph locations taken during the survey	23

FIGURES

Figure 1 Site Location.....	2
Figure 2 Site plan with affected room highlighted	3
Figure 3 Aerial view of site	3
Figure 4 Existing layout of rooms before alterations.....	4
Figure 5 Proposed alterations.....	5
Figure 6 Fermyn Woods Hall	7
Figure 7 Detail from the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886	8
Figure 8 Driveway approach to Fermyn Woods hall.....	11
Figure 9 West facing elevation	11
Figure 10 North facing elevation	12
Figure 11 First floor landing	12
Figure 12 General view of bathroom and affected wall	13
Figure 13 General view of bathroom	13
Figure 14 Blocked fireplace in the bathroom	14
Figure 15 Plaster beading detail at ceiling height in bathroom	14
Figure 16 General view of dressing room.....	15
Figure 17 Dressing room and adjoining wall to the bathroom	15
Figure 18 Beading detail in the dressing room ceiling	16
Figure 19 Shower room in the dressing room.....	16
Figure 20 Initial removal of plaster in the bathroom	17
Figure 21 The two layers of plaster on the bathroom wall	17
Figure 22 Nail detail used to hold laths	18
Figure 23 Plaster and laths removed on the bathroom side of the wall	18
Figure 24 Plaster and laths removed from dressing room side.....	19
Figure 25 Difference in bathroom floor height seen from dressing room	19
Figure 26 Transverse joist sitting on earlier floorboards in bathroom.....	20

Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication and Historic Building Recording at Fermyn Woods Hall, Causin Way, Brigstock, Northamptonshire (SP 95816 87120)

Summary

This report details the results of Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication and Historic Building Recording carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) at Fermyn Woods Hall, Causin Way, Brigstock, Northamptonshire. The Hall is Grade II listed and has its origins in the 17th century although it has been significantly extended and remodelled throughout its history.*

The archaeological work took place during the creation of a new doorway between two existing first floor rooms. The demolition work cut through a plaster and lath stud wall dating to the mid-19th century with no earlier building materials being disturbed. The results of the investigation indicate that the two rooms were created within an earlier room by the insertion of the 19th century stud wall and that one of the rooms had its floor raised in order to avoid a step into the adjacent room.

The report and archive will be deposited under Accession Number ENN110352

Introduction

In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Section 16 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, (MHCLG 2021) this document forms the report for an archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication and historic building recording at Grade II* listed Fermyn Woods Hall, Causin Way, Brigstock, Northamptonshire (SP 95816 87120).

The work was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on behalf of Mr. James Broadbent.

Listed Building Consent (NE/21/00453/LBC) has been granted for minor alterations to two first floor rooms where a new doorway will be created between an existing bathroom and an adjacent room which will become a dressing room. As part of the scheme a new doorway will also be created into a modern shower room.

The Planning Archaeologist as advisor to North Northamptonshire Council planning authority, requested that a programme of archaeological monitoring take place during the removal of existing plaster followed by historic building recording as necessary of the exposed fabric prior to its demolition. This work is required in accordance with Condition 2 of the Listed Building Planning Consent.

Site Location, Geology and Topography

Fermyn Woods Hall is located on the western side of Causin Way nearly 2km north-east of the village of Brigstock. Corby town centre is approximately 8km to the west and Kettering is around 11km to the south-west (Figure 1). The Hall and surrounding

estate lie within a mix of open countryside and woodland set in a gentle rolling landscape which is typical of this part of Northamptonshire. The Hall site consists of the main hall with a former stable complex built around a large courtyard to the south-east (Figure 2 and Figure 3). More stables and other buildings are located to the east of the Hall. A driveway leads from Causin Way up to the front of the Hall.

The site lies on a very gentle slope rising from around 86m AoD at the junction between Causin Way and the entrance track up to around 90m to the north of the Hall. The British Geological Survey of Great Britain indicates that the underlying geology of the locality on which the buildings stand is likely consist of Cornbrash Formation bedrock which is a type of limestone with areas of Blisworth Clay Formation. The superficial deposits generally consist of Oadby Member – clays and gravelly deposits.

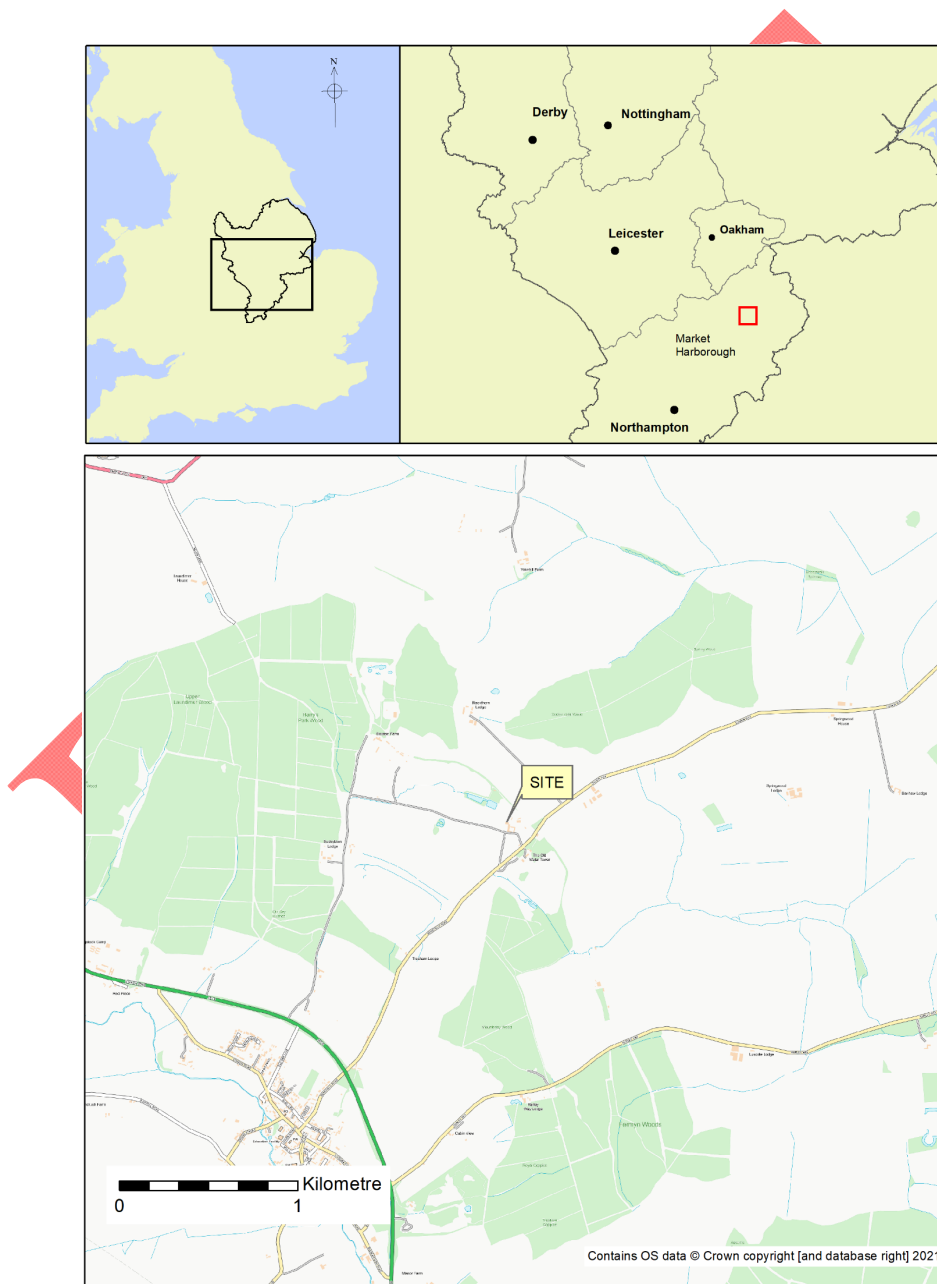


Figure 1 Site Location

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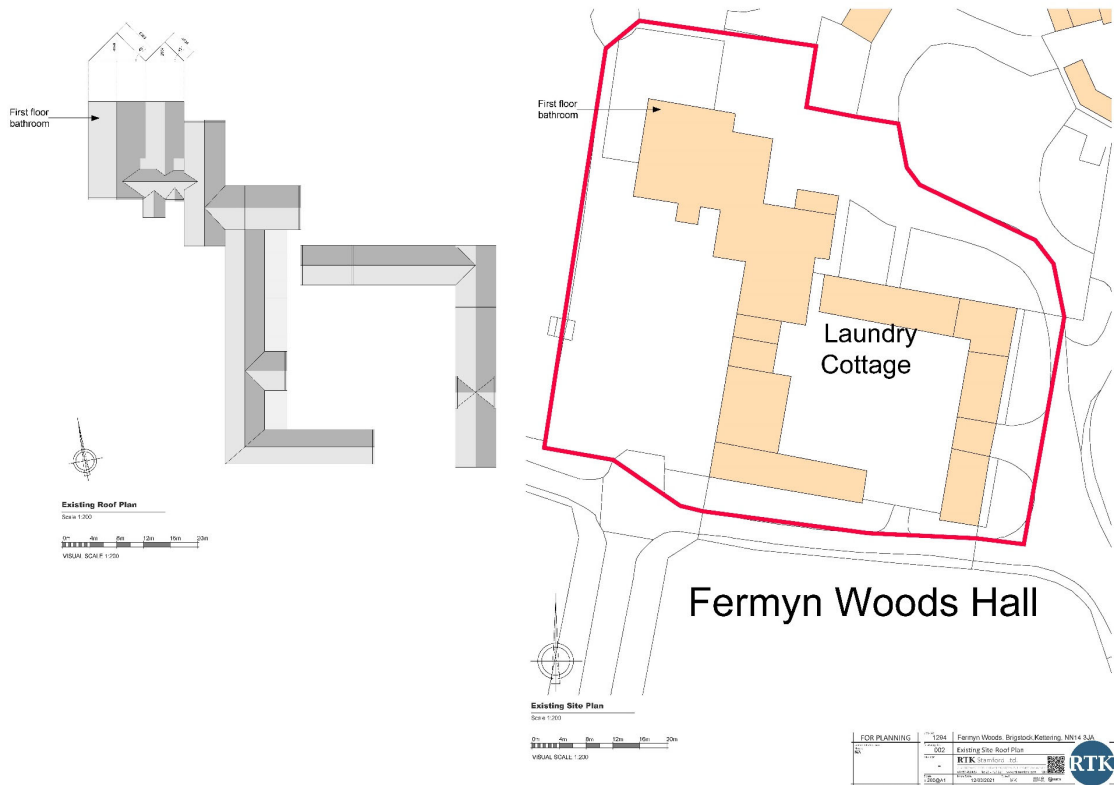


Figure 2 Site plan with affected room highlighted
Plan supplied by Client



Figure 3 Aerial view of site

Bathroom and dressing rooms highlighted in red.

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Building Proposals

The approved proposal for the work was to create a new opening between two existing first floor rooms, to allow access from an ensuite bathroom to a proposed dressing room. The alterations also included the opening of a new doorway from the dressing room into an existing shower room. Before the start of the work it was thought that approximately 4 m² of masonry would be removed to create the new opening between the two rooms.

Before the commencement of the work the first floor rooms, located in the north-western corner of the Hall, consisted of a rectangular bathroom measuring 7.6m by 3.6m with a corner fireplace and chimney breast set at an angle in the south-east corner. The room for the new dressing room had the same dimensions but had a small shower room, around 2.3m wide added into the south end of the room (Figure 4). The angled fireplace in this room is in the south-west corner. Both fireplaces were blocked. The bathroom had a row of modern fitted cupboards along its east wall where the new doorway was to be created. These had been removed the day before the commencement of the archaeological recording.

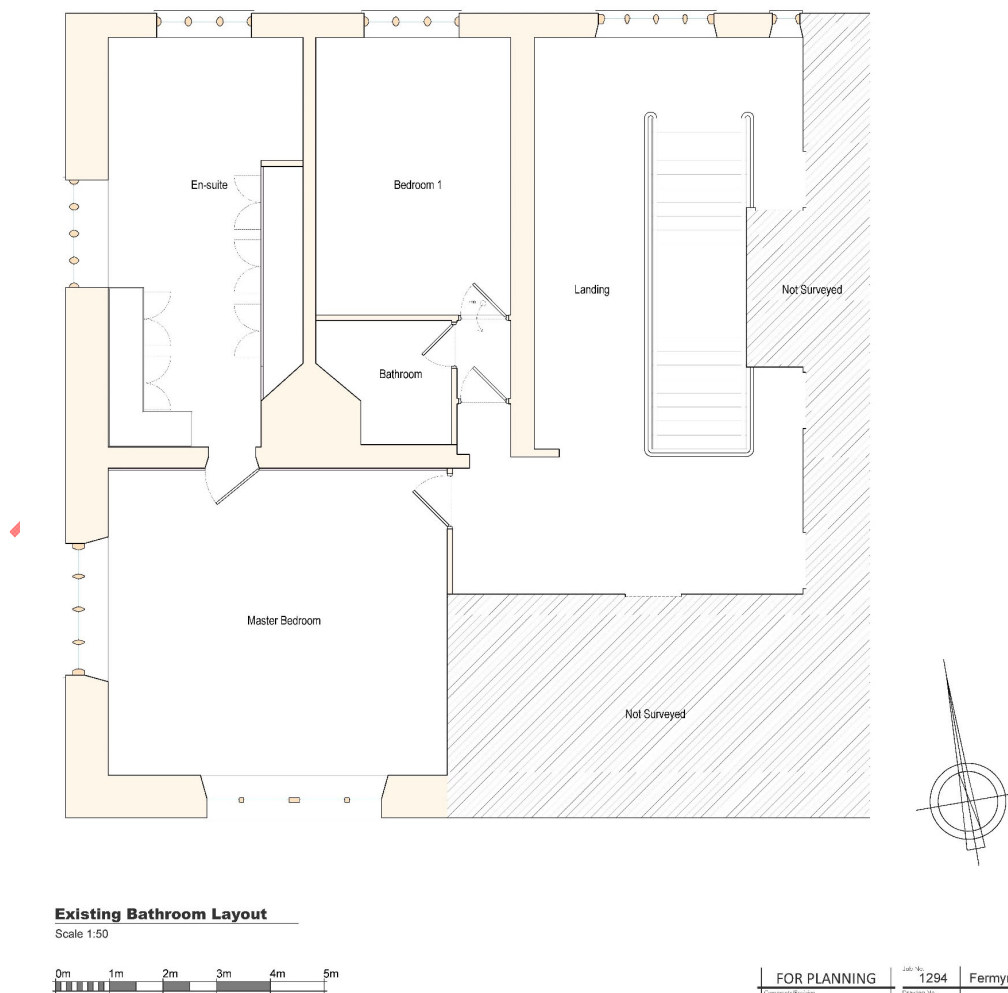
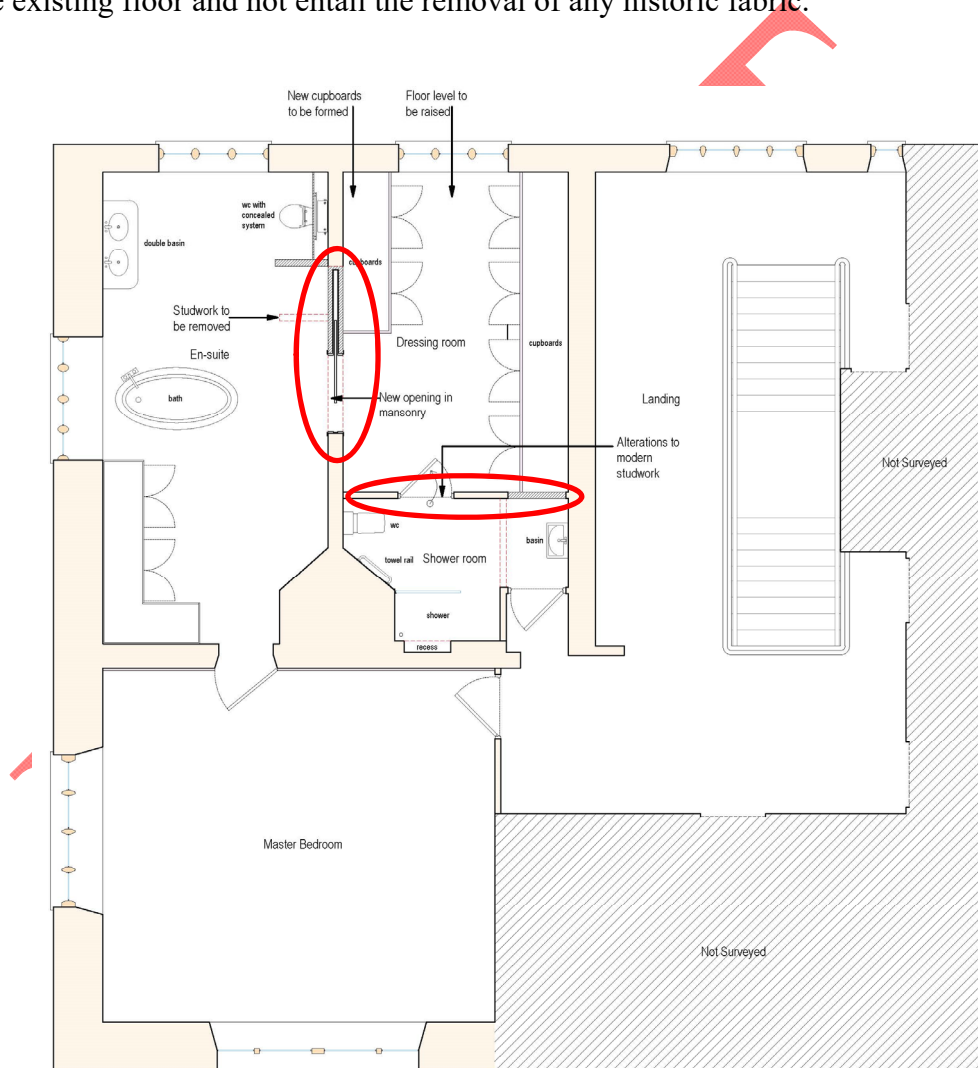


Figure 4 Existing layout of rooms before alterations
The affected rooms are the en-suite and Bedroom 1 top left. Plan supplied by client

The proposed alterations were to knock through the wall between the bathroom and new dressing and create a sliding door within the thickness of the wall. In the event the sliding door idea was abandoned meaning that less of the original fabric needed to be removed (Figure 5). This is discussed in the results section below. A new doorway was proposed into the small shower room in the new dressing room and the existing doorway was to be blocked. The proposals also included creating a recess in the south wall of the new dressing room/shower room but this will not now take place.

Prior to the work it was noted by the architects that the floor of the proposed dressing room was around 10cm lower than the hallway outside and, due to the fact that there is no step, lower than the adjacent bathroom. In order to create two unified rooms it was planned that the floor of the new dressing room be raised. This would build on top of the existing floor and not entail the removal of any historic fabric.



Proposed Bathroom Layout

Scale 1:50



- New wall
- Demolition

FOR PLANNING
Communities & Towns

Figure 5 Proposed alterations
Changes highlighted. Plan supplied by client

Historical Background

King Charles I sold the Fermyn Woods estate to Lord Mordaunt in around 1641, prior to which it had formed part of the wider Rockingham Forest. It is believed that Lord Mordaunt constructed the first house soon afterwards. By the late 1600s the estate had passed to the Earl of Upper Ossory by way of marriage. He extended the Hall by building the drawing room in 1777 and the library in 1789. Following his death in 1818 the estate was inherited by his two daughters the Ladies Anne and Gertrude Fitzpatrick then, by later marriage, to the First Lord Lyvedon. The Hall was significantly altered and enlarged in the 19th century. The Maxwell Family purchased the estate in 1922 and continued in residence until 2002. During this time the Hall saw a significant decline until in the late 1960s the large 19th century west wing was demolished. An engraving produced by J P Neale in the first half of the 19th century shows the now-demolished wing (Figure 6). Presumably this drawing was made to commemorate the new extension. All early references up to the 1920s name the site as Farming Woods. It would seem likely that it was the Maxwell Family who changed the name to Fermyn Woods.

The Hall and associated stables and ancillary buildings are Grade II* listed and the listing discusses much of the background to the Hall:

Country house. Early/mid C17, altered and extended C18, and early and mid C19 for the Ladies Fitzpatrick and Lord Lyvedon. C19 west wing demolished mid C20. Squared coursed limestone and limestone ashlar with Welsh and Collyweston slate and C20 plain-tile roofs. Double-depth plan with stable courtyard attached. 2 storeys with attic. Entrance front of 5 bays each with gables. Bay to left of centre breaks forward as 2-storey porch, bay to right has small gable and flanking bays have larger gables. 3- and 4-light stone mullion windows to each gable, those at ground floor have transoms. Some attic windows may be C17, others are all C19. Similar windows in return wall of right hand gable. Porch doorway is C20 with ashlar surround. Ashlar gable parapets, kneelers and finials. Ashlar stacks at ridge and ends. Sundial above first floor porch window. 2-storey, 2-window range attached at right angles to far right, links with stables. Stone mullion windows to ground floor and single eaves dormer to first floor. Attic range of rear wing is visible above this range. Elevation to left of entrance front is a 2-window range of reset stone mullion windows. The former west wing was attached to this elevation. Rear elevation has 3 gables, that to left is taller and breaks forward. 3- and 4-light stone mullion windows, all similar to entrance front. Service wing attached to right was removed mid C20: Stables attached to right of entrance front are single storey with attic. C17 gate arch to right of entrance front was built for Sir Lewis Tresham and was reset, mid C19, from Lyvedon Old Buildings, Aldwinckle. Semi-circular arch flanked by niches with 3 shields above each niche. Moulded stone cornice and entablature surmounted by armorial device with elaborate supporting scrolls. C19 openwork balustrade links to 4-window range to left and gable end of range at right angles to right. Range to left, forming south side of courtyard has casement windows under stone lintels with keyblocks. 3 roof dormers. Ashlar gable parapet to right and hipped roof to left. Range at right angles to left links with entrance front of house, and forms west side of courtyard. 6 bays with doorway, to left of centre, having gable over. Two, 3-light, stone mullion windows to left and three similar 2-light windows, with transoms, to right. Rear elevation of this range, to the courtyard, has central projecting gable and is probably remains of C17 stables. Two 3-light stone mullion windows to right. C19 range to right of gate arch, forming east side of courtyard, is of 5 bays. Central carriage arch with gable over and gabled eaves

dormers with 2-light stone mullion windows. Rear elevation has coach house door. C19 two-storey range, to north of courtyard, is former laundry with central lateral stack to courtyard elevation. Stone mullion windows to rear. Interior: entrance hall has mid C19 staircase with elaborately carved newels, all reset from west wing. Mid C19 tiled floor with armorial devices of Lyveden family. Sitting Room and Drawing Room, to left of entrance, have C18 style fireplaces. The house was probably originally a hunting lodge in the Rockingham Forest. It was owned by Sir John Robinson in the early C18 and passed to the Earls of Upper Ossery who added a late C18 west wing which was remodelled C19 and subsequently demolished. The house then passed to the Ladies Fitzpatrick and Lord Lyveden who carried out considerable C19 alterations. (*Buildings of England: Northamptonshire*, p.216; Gotch, J.A., *Squires Homes and Other Old Buildings of Northamptonshire*, p.7; Northamptonshire Records Office, *Architectural Drawings Collection*).

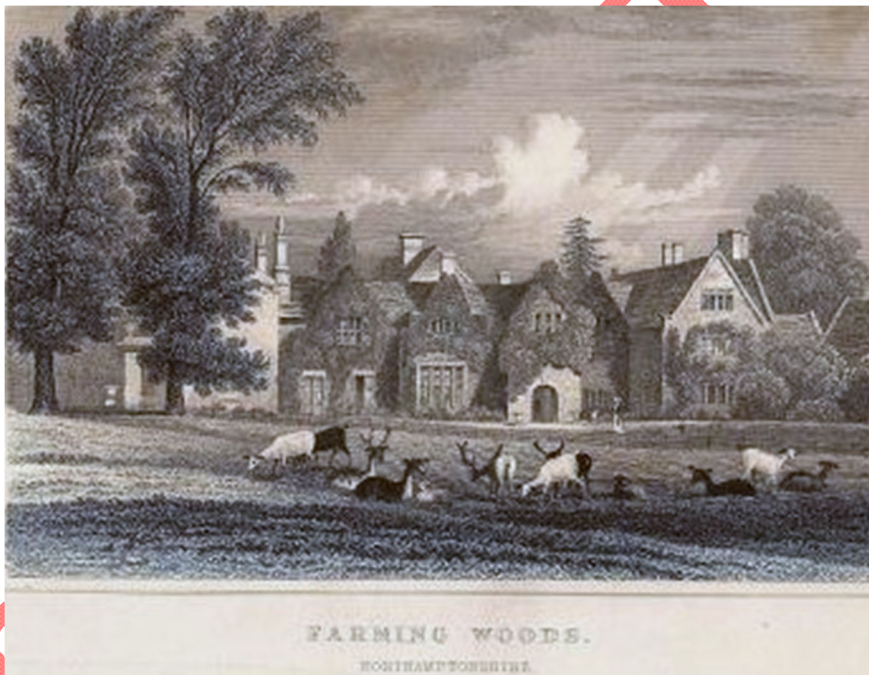


Figure 6 Fermyn Woods Hall

Engraving by J P Neal, 1830s. The now-demolished west wing is seen behind the trees on the left

Cartographic Evidence

The first available map of the site is the First Edition Ordnance Survey map published in 1886 which shows the site named as Farming Woods (Figure 7). This shows the Hall at its maximum extent with the large 19th century wing still in place on the west side of the building. Subsequent editions published in 1900 and 1926 show the same basic footprint of the Hall although the 1926 edition shows the name has changed to Fermyn Woods.

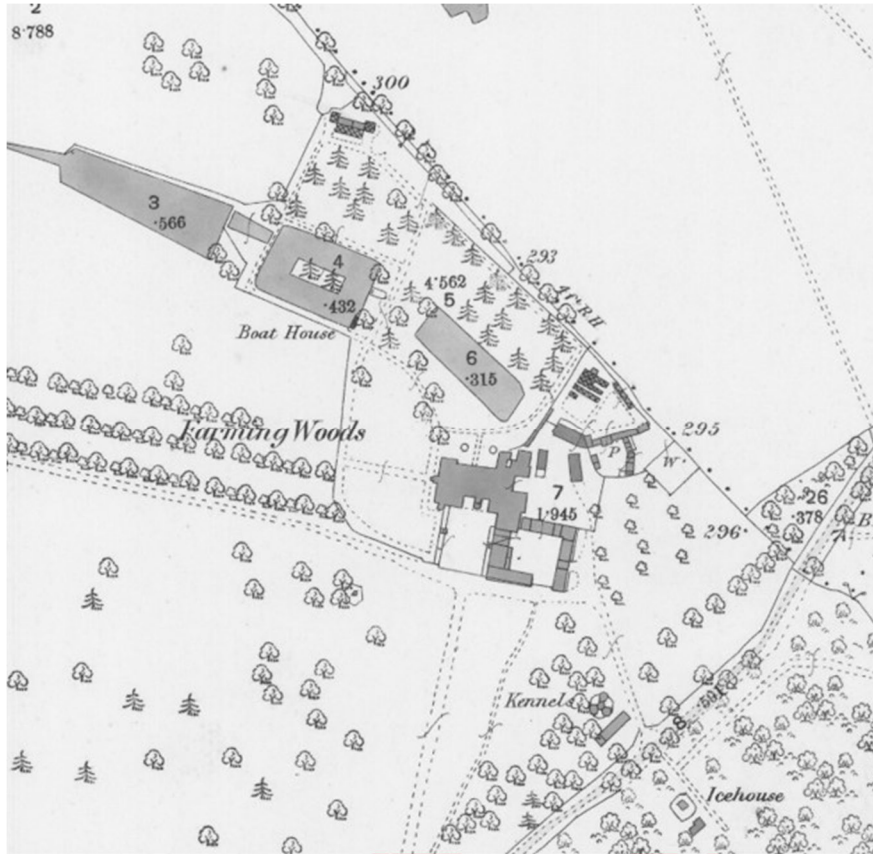


Figure 7 Detail from the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886

Note the presence of the west wing at this time

Sheet: Northamptonshire XVIII.6 Original scale 25 inch: 1 mile

Objectives

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced by ULAS defining the project and detailing the scope of the archaeological observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication and historic building project. Within the stated project objectives, the principal aim of the building recording was to provide a photographic, written and drawn record of the historic building and associated structures prior to the commencement of any redevelopment or demolition work.

In brief, the objectives of the historic building Survey were to:

- To provide a photographic, written, and drawn if necessary, record of all the affected rooms and parts of historic fabric prior to the commencement of works and during the work.
- To ensure the long-term preservation of the information through deposition of the record and a summary written report with an appropriate depository.

Methodology

The methodology and recording system employed for the historic building recording component of the work was equivalent to a Level 2 survey as stated in the ULAS WSI.

However, if significant historic fabric was exposed during the work then a more detailed and higher level of recording would be employed. The survey followed Historic England's guidelines *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (2016). Only the affected rooms and fabric were recorded in detail although surrounding rooms and external elevations were also recorded in order to place the works in their context.

Level 2 is a descriptive record, and normally comprises an introductory description followed by a brief account of the building's origins, development and use. The record at this level also includes all readily available drawn and photographic records required to illustrate the building's appearance and structure and to support the analysis. The Historic Building Survey involves the preparation of written, drawn and photographic records as discussed in the WSI.

All work was carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structure* (updated 2020) and adhered to their *Code of Conduct* (updated 2021). The event number ENN110352 was used to identify all records.

The fieldwork was undertaken on the 15th of February 2022.

Results

The site was visited on the 15th of February 2022. The Hall is in use as a private residence and is in a good state of repair. The present alterations are intended to improve the use of the two affected rooms rather than to repair them.

As noted above, Fermyn Woods hall is approached along a driveway from Causin Way to the south-east (Figure 8). The variation in, and number of, roof lines and gables give an indication of the additions and changes that the building has undergone throughout its lifetime. The affected rooms are on the first floor in the north-western corner with the bathroom windows facing to the west and north (Figure 9 and Figure 10). Most external walls of the Hall are of coursed ashlar limestone with the exception of the north facing gable which is rendered and which may therefore suggest that this wall may contain scars and evidence of earlier building phases which are now hidden by the render.

Inside at first floor level the two affected rooms lie to the north-west of the large central staircase and landing (Figure 11). The bathroom is reached by passing through the south-west corner bedroom which has the same floor height as the bathroom. The day before the alteration began some modern fitted cupboards which ran along the eastern wall were removed (Figure 12). The two bathroom windows have stone mullions with metal-framed windows set within (Figure 13). The blocked fireplace sits at an angle to the room which suggests that the dividing wall was part of the original design of the room (Figure 14). The room has a plaster beading detail running around the top of the room at ceiling height and which has been modified where the former cupboards were fitted (Figure 15).

The proposed dressing room has been subdivided by the addition of a small shower room at its southern end (Figure 16). The dividing wall between the dressing room and the main bathroom runs along the west side of this room (Figure 17). This room also has the same plaster beading detail seen in the bathroom. The difference here is that the beading has been removed where the shower room has been inserted. A copy of the beading has however been added along the outside of the shower room wall (Figure

18). The shower room has an angled fireplace which has been blocked and a sink unit set in front of it (Figure 19). The main floor of the dressing room is approximately 10cm lower than the landing floor.

Initial removal of plaster on the wall between the bathroom and dressing room showed it to be a plaster and lath stud wall and not the masonry wall expected in the RTK Heritage Assessment (Figure 20). Because some of the wooden studs were structural and supporting the ceiling it was decided that a sliding door set within the wall thickness would not be practical and that any door would need to be set between supporting studs instead. The new doorway will still be around 2m high but only will only be approximately 1.1m wide and with conventionally opening doors.

More removal of plaster showed that the plaster was a lime mix full of animal hair with a primary layer pressed into the laths and scored with a trowel to provide a key for the skimming layer (Figure 21). Square section nails with square heads were used to attach the laths to the studs (Figure 22). This type of nail and the plaster type would suggest a probable mid-19th century date for the wall.

Removal of the laths to the full width of the new doorway continued on both sides of the wall leaving just the studs in place (Figure 24). This work proved that the entire wall was of a single phase with no masonry being present. Once the new doorway had been opened it was possible to see that the bathroom floor had been raised by laying new (i.e. 19th century) joists on top of the existing floor (Figure 25 and Figure 26). This raised floor then matched the floor height of the bedroom to the south. It is not clear why the dressing room floor did not receive the same treatment to create a level floor throughout. All new services for the bathroom and the dressing room will be placed within the void beneath the raised floors so that no historic fabric will be affected by this stage of the alterations. Also exposed during the work was a small wooden box which appeared to be a box to hold an electrical socket from a very early phase of electrification. A brief inspection of the rear of the plain skirting boards in both rooms indicated that they had been cut with a circular saw.

A new doorway will be made in the southern wall of the dressing room in order to change access into the shower room. This wall is a thin (0.1m) stud wall made of modern plasterboard which has been inserted into the room to create the modern shower room.



Figure 8 Driveway approach to Fermyn Woods hall
Looking north. Hall on left, former stables on right



Figure 9 West facing elevation
Looking north-east. Bathroom window is arrowed



Figure 10 North facing elevation
Looking south. Dressing room shown by green arrow, the bathroom is the red arrow



Figure 11 First floor landing
Looking north. Doorway to dressing room is to the right of the 1m scale. The door to the bathroom is through the bedroom on the left



Figure 12 General view of bathroom and affected wall
Looking north-east. The new doorway will be where the 1m scale is located. The mark on the ceiling shows where modern fitted cupboards were located



Figure 13 General view of bathroom
Looking south-west. 1m scale. Note corner fireplace on left



Figure 14 Blocked fireplace in the bathroom
Looking south-east. 1m scale

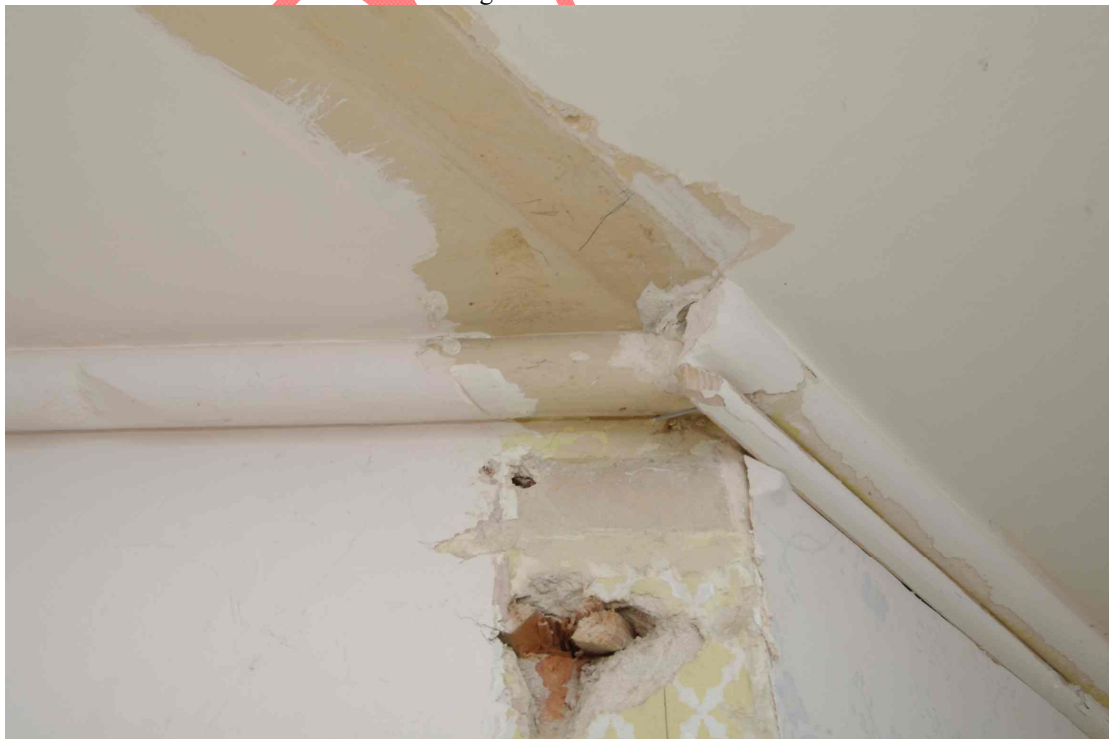


Figure 15 Plaster beading detail at ceiling height in bathroom
Note the jutting section which has been added to match the fitted cupboards (now removed)



Figure 16 General view of dressing room

Looking south. Note step in floor above the 1m scale. The wall in the centre of the picture has the shower room behind it and is 20th century in date. The doorway will be blocked and a new door inserted to the right of it



Figure 17 Dressing room and adjoining wall to the bathroom

Looking north. The new doorway to the bathroom will be to the left of the 1m scale



Figure 18 Beading detail in the dressing room ceiling
Looking north-east. The beading on the left is a modern copy fitted to the modern stud wall

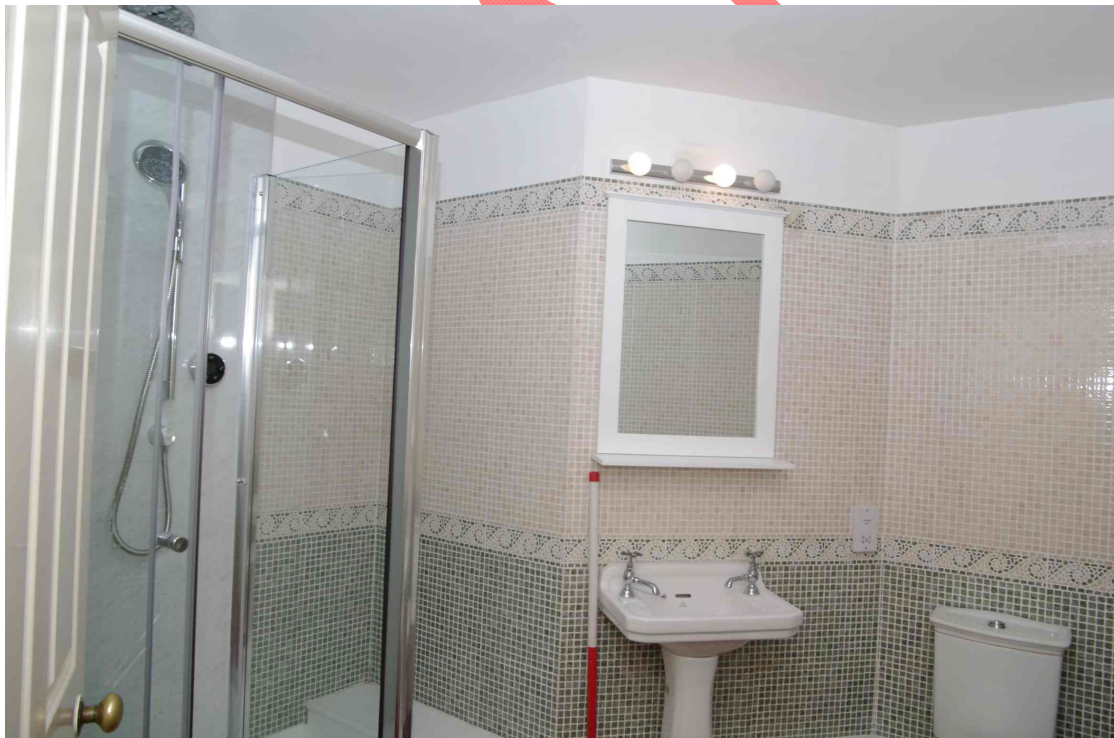


Figure 19 Shower room in the dressing room
Looking south-east. The angled fireplace is behind the sink unit



Figure 20 Initial removal of plaster in the bathroom
Looking north-east. 1m scale



Figure 21 The two layers of plaster on the bathroom wall



Figure 22 Nail detail used to hold laths



Figure 23 Plaster and laths removed on the bathroom side of the wall
Looking west. 1m scale. This will be the full width of the new door



Figure 24 Plaster and laths removed from dressing room side
Looking north-west. The opening is not yet up to its full 2m height in this picture



Figure 25 Difference in bathroom floor height seen from dressing room
Looking south-east. 1m scale. Note the small wooden box for early electrical socket



Figure 26 Transverse joist sitting on earlier floorboards in bathroom
Looking through the existing bathroom floor

Conclusion

The creation of the new doorway between the bathroom and the new dressing room revealed exclusively mid-19th century building fabric. The thin partition wall creating the small shower room at the south end of the dressing room is later 20th century in date.

The floor of the bathroom appears to have been raised by placing joists on top of an existing floor in order to avoid a step up into the adjacent bedroom to the south. It is not clear why the same floor treatment was not given to the new dressing room although it is possible that this room was intended for a maid or nanny who, given her status in the household, would not qualify for such comforts. The raising of the floor indicates that the room as a whole is earlier than mid-19th century and that the lath and plaster wall, angled fireplaces and new floor level represent an inserted phase of building or modernisation. That the bathroom floor was originally lower than the bedroom to the south means that it, and the new dressing room, are probably of a different phase to the adjacent rooms.

Acknowledgements

The project was managed by Vicki Score and the fieldwork was carried out and written up by Andrew Hyam. Mr James Broadbent supplied the drawings and other background information.

References and Sources

All websites accessed February 2022

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Appendix 2 Photograph locations taken during the survey

Photo No	Subject	Facing	Scale
1	Pre-work shot of Bathroom	NE	1m
2	Pre-work shot of Bathroom	NE	1m
3	Pre-work shot of Bathroom	NE	1m
4	Pre-work shot of Bathroom	S	1m
5	Pre-work shot of Bathroom	SW	1m
6	Pre-work shot of Bathroom	NE	1m
7	Bathroom fireplace	SE	1m
8	Bathroom fireplace	SE	1m
9	Bathroom door from bedroom	NW	1m
10	Pre-work shot of dressing room	NW	1m
11	Pre-work shot of dressing room	SW	1m
12	Pre-work shot of dressing room	SE	1m
13	Pre-work shot of dressing room	S	1m
14	Pre-work shot of shower room	SW	1m
15	View from landing	NW	1m
16	View from landing	NW	1m
17	Bathroom - exposed laths	E	
18	Bathroom -area for door	E	1m
19	Bathroom -close-up of laths, nails and stud	E	
20	Bathroom - beading above fireplace	SE	

21	Dressing room - beading in SW corner	SW	
22	Dressing room - beading in SW corner	SW	
23	Bathroom west window	NW	0.4m
24	Bedroom west window	SW	0.4m
25	Bathroom - working shot	NE	1m
26	Bathroom - working shot	E	
27	Bathroom - marks on plaster	E	
28	Bathroom - full extent of doorway	E	1m
29	Bathroom - full extent of doorway	E	1m
30	Bathroom - close-up of lath nails	SE	
31	Dressing room - working shot	W	1m
32	Dressing room - working shot	SW	1m
33	Dressing room - working shot	NW	0.4m
34	Bedroom - joists under floor	NW	
35	Bedroom - joists under floor	NW	
36	Bathroom - laths removed	W	0.4 & 1m
37	Bathroom - laths removed	W	0.4 & 1m
38	Dressing room - lower half of doorway	SW	0.4 & 1m
39	Dressing room - lower half of doorway	SW	0.4 & 1m
40	Dressing room - lower half of doorway	SW	0.4 & 1m
41	Dressing room - lower half of doorway	W	0.4 & 1m
42	Dressing room - lower half of doorway	W	0.4 & 1m
43	Bathroom - all laths removed	NE	1m
44	Dressing room - lower half of door opened up	NW	1m
45	Dressing room - lower half of door opened up	SW	1m
46	Fermyn Hall from driveway	N	
47	Fermyn Hall from driveway	N	
48	Fermyn Hall from driveway	N	
49	Affected west wing	NE	
50	Affected west wing	E	
51	Affected west wing	E	
52	Affected west wing	S	
53	West facing elevation of Hall	E	
54	West facing elevation of Hall	E	



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