

**An Archaeological Building Survey  
of a former farmhouse at  
22 Cropston Road, Anstey,  
Leicestershire (SK552088)**

**Gavin Speed**

For: Haywood Exclusive Homes  
Planning Application No: 04/1791/2

**Checked by Project Manager**

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## **An Archaeological Building Survey of a Grade II listed former farmhouse at 22 Cropston Road, Anstey, Leicestershire (NGR SK 552 088).**

**Gavin Speed**

### **Summary**

*An archaeological building survey of a Grade II listed former farmhouse at 22 Cropston Road, Anstey, was undertaken in September 2004 by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on behalf of Hayward Exclusive Homes. The survey was undertaken at Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) Level 3.*

*A copy of the archive will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council, Sites and Monuments Record under the Accession number X.A.172 2004.*



Figure 1: Front (south-east) elevation.

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 The residential development by Hayward Exclusive Homes lies within an area of c.0.3 ha on the north side of Cropston Road, Anstey, Leicestershire (SK 552 088; planning application number 04/1791/2). Previous archaeological work for development to the south of Cropston Road included evaluations and excavations which indicated that there is archaeological potential in the area as a 12th-13th century medieval site was recorded during excavations in 1996 and 2002 prior to the construction of a sewer and the Co-op store (ULAS Reports 2000-163; 2002-212; Browning and Higgins 2003; SMR ref LE398).

1.2 A programme of archaeological works was therefore required to further elucidate the archaeological potential of the site. ULAS was commissioned to produce an

archaeological Desk-based assessment (ULAS report 2004-111), and intrusive investigations in the form of trial trenching (ULAS report 2004-119). The reports identified buildings of architectural significance and archaeological remains of medieval and post-medieval date. As part of the re-development of the site, a grade II listed former farmhouse (Fig.1) was to be renovated and re-designed, therefore a building survey was required to fulfil the planning conditions issued by Charwood Borough Council following Planning Policy Guidelines 16 (PPG 16, Archaeology and Planning).

1.3 This report presents the results of an historic building survey of the former farmhouse at 22 Cropston Road, Anstey, Leicestershire undertaken to RCHME Level 3 standards (RCHME 1996). The building survey was conducted during the week beginning 22 September 2004 by the author. In addition to the photographic and drawn information obtained through fieldwork, analysis has been supported by further information from the English Heritage Listings Description, and from early cartographic evidence.

1.4 The proposed development site is located on the north-west side of Cropston Road, Anstey, Leicestershire at NRG SK 552 088. It consists of an area of c.0.3 hectares in which it is proposed to construct residential dwellings; the site consists of an open former garden area to the rear of two buildings set back slightly from Cropston road. An 'L' shaped range of outbuildings are present to the southwest, these were single storey buildings of mainly of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century date. To the east of the entrance is the brick built two-storey cottage that is of late 17<sup>th</sup> century date.

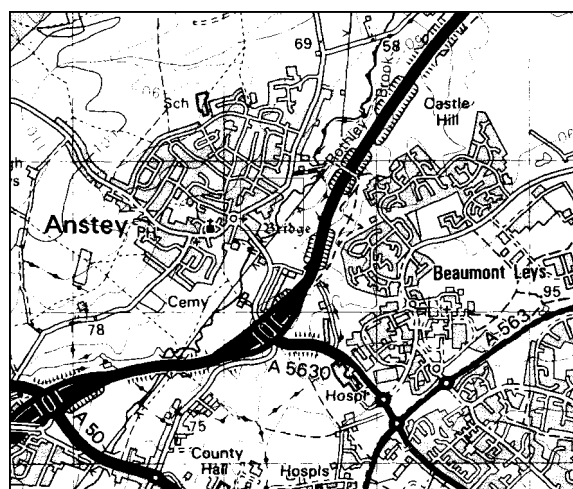


Figure 2: Site location Scale 1:50000

Reproduced from the Landranger OS map 140 Leicester Coventry and Rugby area 1:50000 map by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 1996. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 10002186.

## 2. Aims

2.1 The primary objective of the building recording programme was to record and interpret areas of historic fabric, which are to be altered or removed either in part or whole, *in situ* to a standard that will allow the future interpretation of the building within the context for which it was originally designed and subsequently adapted.

### 3. Methodology

3.1 The building survey was undertaken to the standards as stated in the IFA *Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures* (1996), and with the RCHME *Recording Historic Buildings: A Descriptive Specification* (1996) and *Procedures for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records Service).

3.2 The following sources have been consulted:

- 1) Archaeological records (Leicestershire County Council Heritage Services Sites and Monuments Record).
- 2) Previous Ordnance Survey maps of the area (Record Office for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland)
- 3) Historical background material (ULAS Reference Library)
- 4) Site Plans (Haywood Exclusive Homes Ltd)

3.3 The measured drawings have been digitised using TurboCAD version 7, all drawing conventions follow RCHME guidelines (RCHME 1996). The building was photographed using a Pentax 35 mm camera and additional shots were made with a digital camera; exterior shots were made of the front, side, and rear of the building and all interior rooms. The long axis of the building is oriented approximately northeast – southwest. For ease of description this is taken hereafter as north-south with principal elevation being the south front overlooking Cropston Road.

### 4. Description of the building

4.1 The building stands to the north of Cropston Road *c.*63m above O.D. The building is a two and a half storey red brick former farmhouse built on a granite plinth and with a slate covered roof. Pevsner (1992:73) notes a date stone of 1690, although this is no longer visible. The brickwork is of a Flemish bond measuring 230mm (9") x 55mm (2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>") x 110mm (4<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>").

4.2 It is constructed in the ‘Wreake Valley’ style. This term was coined by the late V.R. Webster to describe a distinctive group of buildings within a relatively tight geographical distribution, centred upon the valleys of the River Wreake and River Soar (Webster 1965: 71). Although mainly confined to Leicestershire there are surviving examples in the Nottinghamshire villages of Rempstone and East Leake. The style is characterised by projecting moulded brick stringcourses that are swept up into semicircular arches over the windows, Diaper patterned brickwork (decorative designs formed using over-fired bricks, Fig. 3) is also a common characteristic (as seen on the south and west elevations of this building, figure 11 and 16). The Wreake Valley tradition has been equated with the Artisan Mannerist style, which saw bricklayers actively seeking to elevate the status of their profession (Smith 1992: 63). Perhaps fifteen buildings in the Wreake Valley style have been identified to date,

attributable in the main to the last quarter of the 17th century. Queniborough Old Hall, dated 1670 and 1675, is the apparent doyen; other surviving examples range from the relatively large homes of prosperous yeomen farmers to comparatively modest two bay dwellings. The stable block at Belgrave Hall, Belgrave, dated 1710, displays all of the Wreake Valley style characteristics, including moulded brick hoods swept over *œil-de-bœuf*, and may represent the final flourish of the tradition proper, down-graded to an ancillary building, although moulded brick continued to be used in projecting string, eaves and plinth courses until the mid-18th century (Webster 1965: 74). Several of the buildings identified by Webster have been demolished and others survive in only very fragmentary condition. The house at Cropston Road, Anstey represents a relatively complete survival.

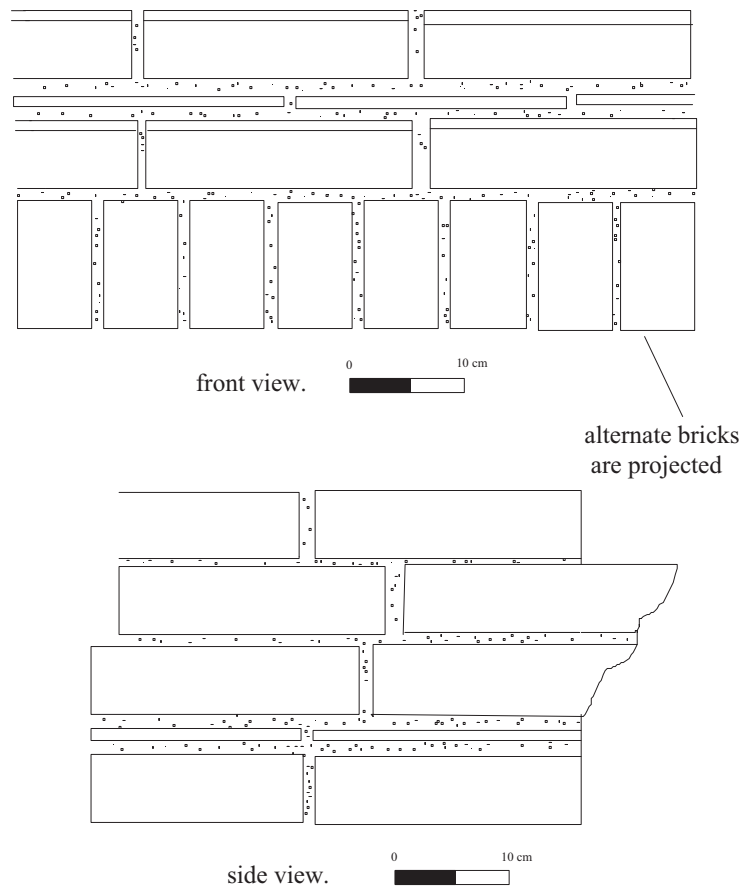


Figure 3: Front and side view of the moulded and dentillated brick stringcourse.

4.3 The front (east) elevation displays four identical diaper patterned brickwork designs (Fig. 11). A moulded brick string course at the first floor level is swept up into segmental arches over former window openings. The second higher stringcourse survives on the west elevation but not on the south elevation where the eaves course was probably removed when the roofline was altered (in the mid-19th century according to the listing description). There are no diaper or stringcourses on the north or east elevations.



Figure 4: Rear (north) elevation.

4.4 Two original windows have been bricked-up below the semicircular arches on the east elevation and one on the west elevation. The off-centre doorway on the east elevation has also been bricked-up. These were probably bricked-up in the nineteenth century when the building ceased to be used as a residential dwelling, and was converted into a stable. A series of new door openings were created on the north elevation at this time.



Figures 5 & 6: Blocked windows on the south and west elevations.

4.5 Both the diaper brickwork and stringcourse have been significantly truncated at the northeast gabled end (Fig. 8), the brickwork on the northeast elevation is also significantly different to that seen elsewhere on the building, therefore the northeast gabled-end appears to be a complete re-build. The 1762 Enclosure Map provides a clue as to the original plan form of the building. It indicates that the building may have had another bay on the east end and a small rear projecting wing, this is discussed in greater depth in '5. Discussion/analysis'.





Figure 7 & 8: Diaper on south elevation and truncated diaper and stringcourse.

4.6 The stonework visible in the southwest end wall of the house may indicate a more complex structural sequence and origins earlier than 1690. A number of Wreake Valley style houses are known to contain elements of earlier, timber-framed structures, which were ‘updated’ in the late 17th century with contemporary brick façades. For example the Wreake Valley brickwork façade of a now demolished house in Turn Street, Syston that concealed a significantly earlier cruck frame (Webster 1965) and number 3 Brook Street Syston, dated 1686, which includes timber-framed elements and a stone plinth (McWhirr 1997:49).



Figure 9: West gabled elevation showing stone built lower section of wall.

4.7 The 19th century alterations saw major changes to the interior of the building, which was converted to provide stabling for horses, a tack room (Bays 2 and 3) and grooms accommodation (Bay 1). A new first floor was inserted over Bays 2 and 3 and a second floor added in Bay 1.

4.8 The roof structure was altered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with side walls raised in brick and the roof re-laid to a shallower pitch (and covered with Swithland slate). The new roof was supported by an inserted suspended king post roof truss (Campbell 2000:45 Fig.10). The internal chimney stack at the west elevation was probably also inserted as part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century alterations. It is certainly not original as it blocks the first floor window in the west gable wall. The position of the original chimneystack is uncertain. It may have occupied the narrow central bay serving fireplaces in one or both of the adjacent rooms. In this position the flank wall of the stack may have defined a lobby entrance (Brunskill 1997:62-69). Alternatively the stack may have been located at the east end of bay 3, between this and the demolished bay beyond. In this case a cross passage plan might be envisaged (Brunskill 1997:60-63).



Figure 10: King-post roof truss.

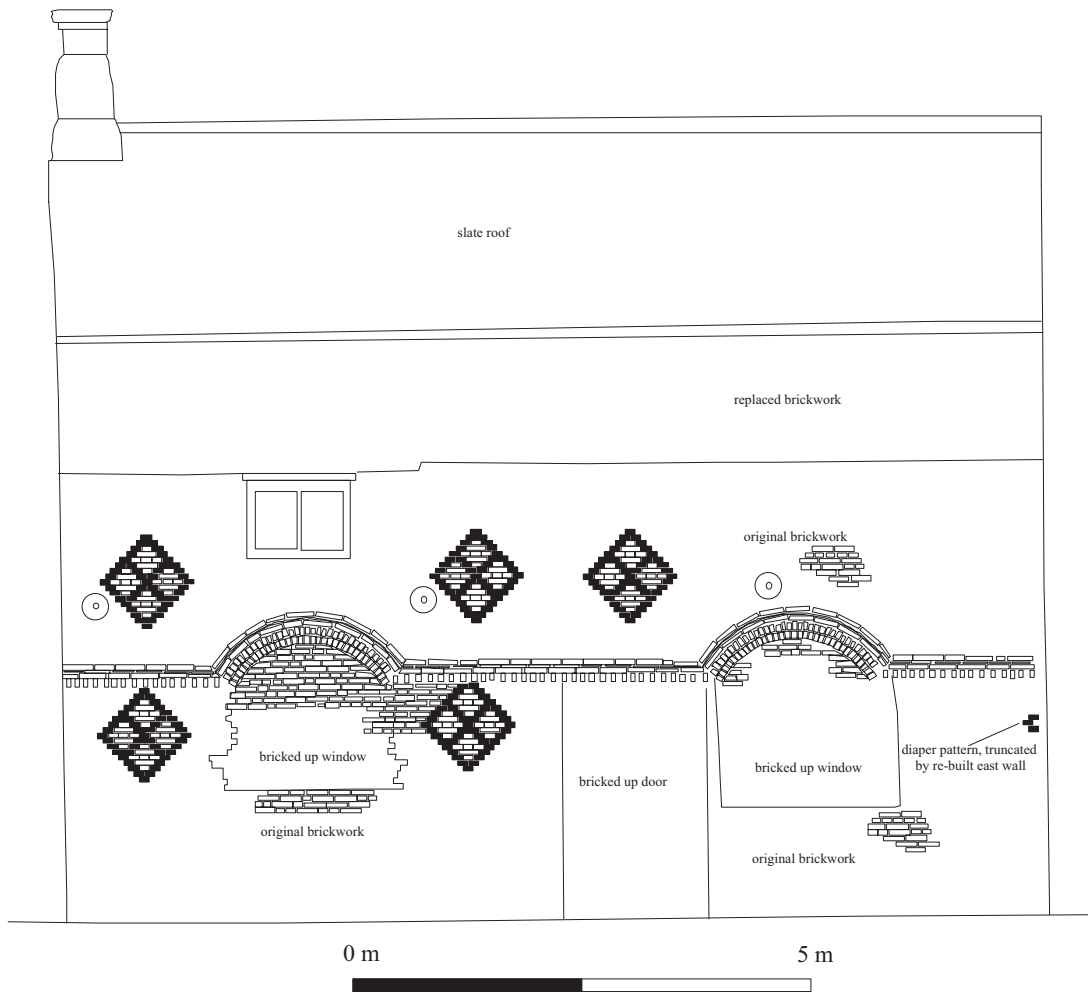


Figure 11: Front (east) elevation.

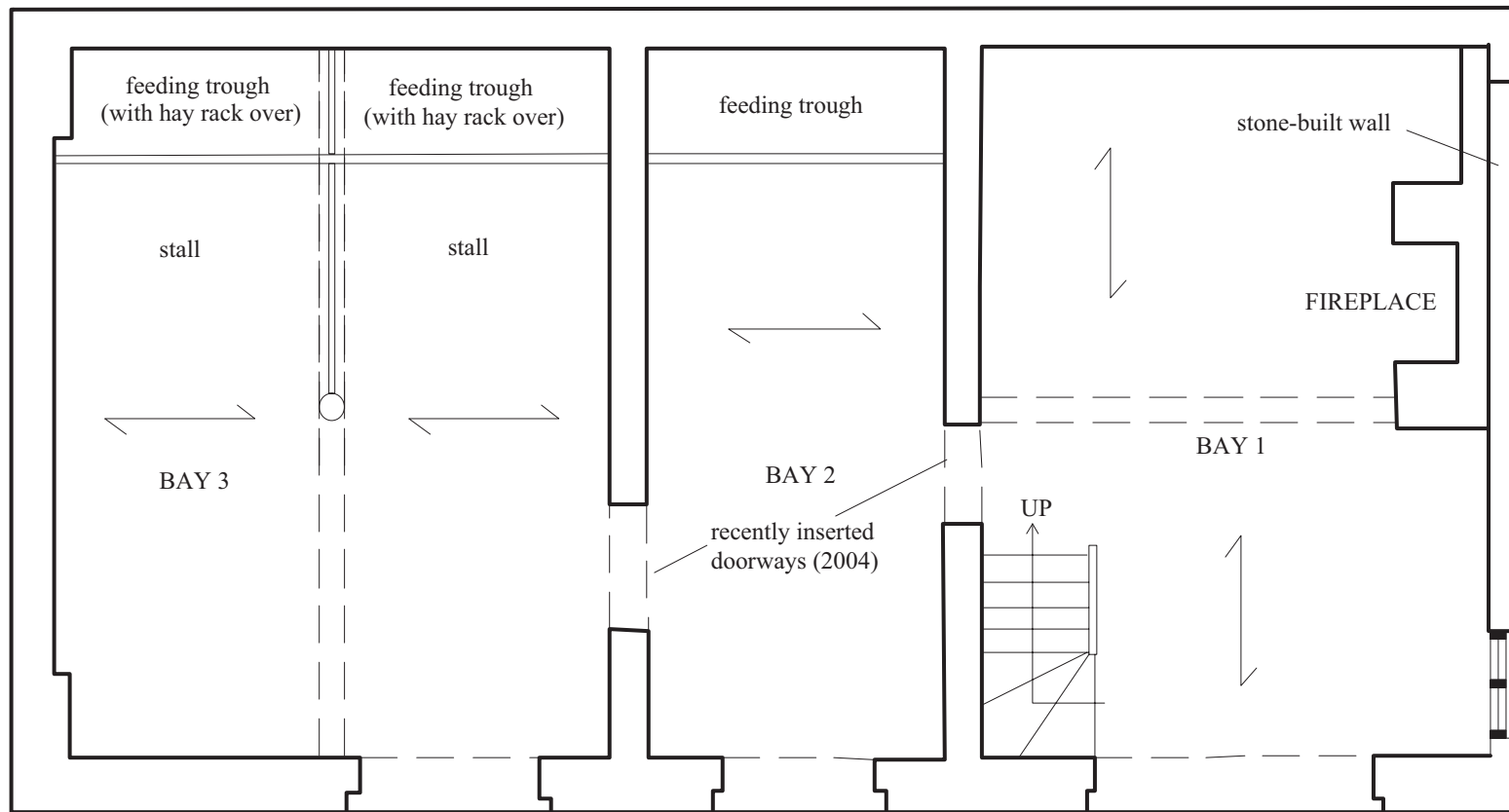
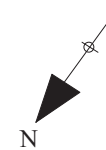


Figure 12: Ground floor plan



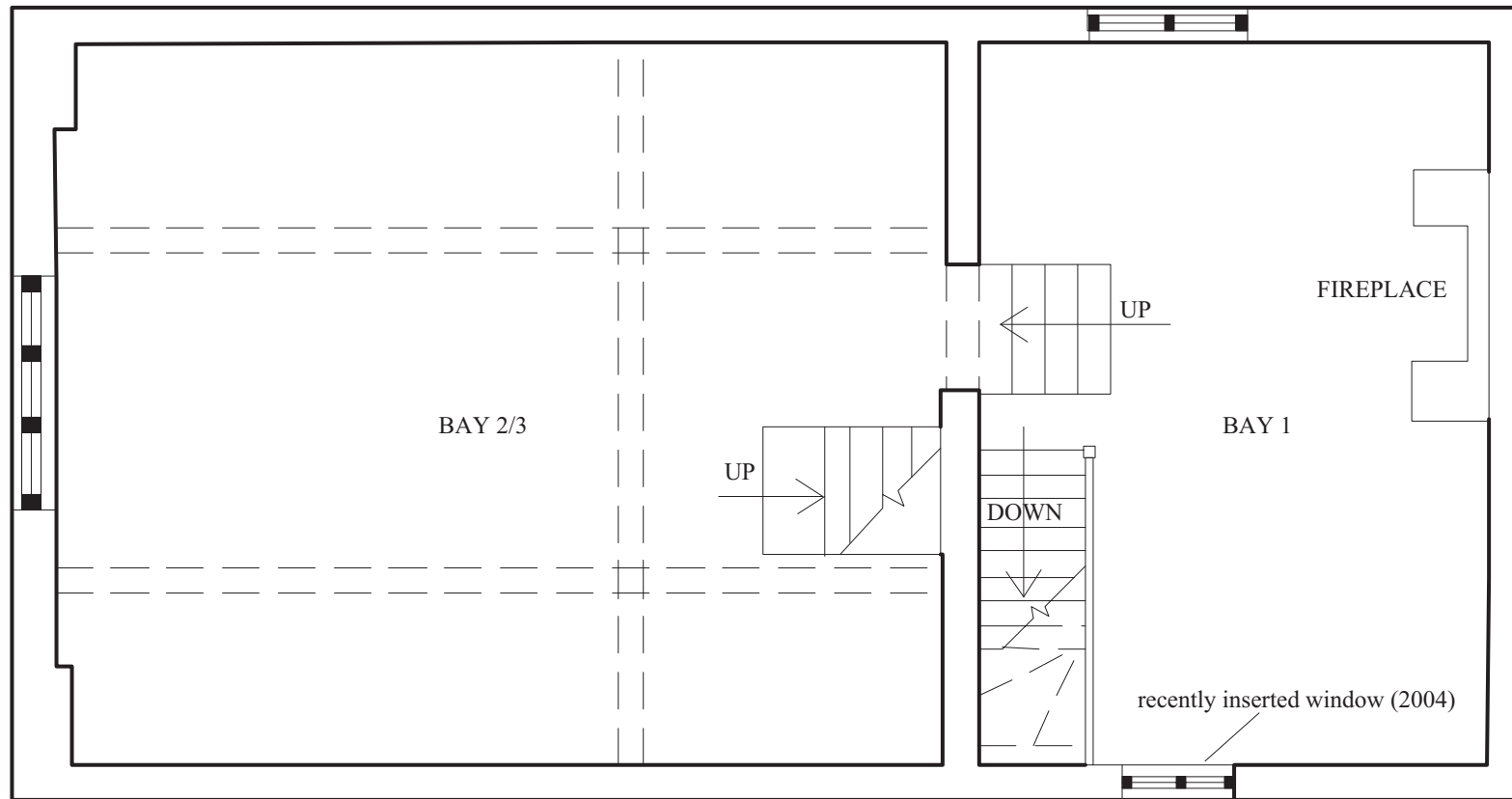


Figure 13: First floor plan

0 5 metres



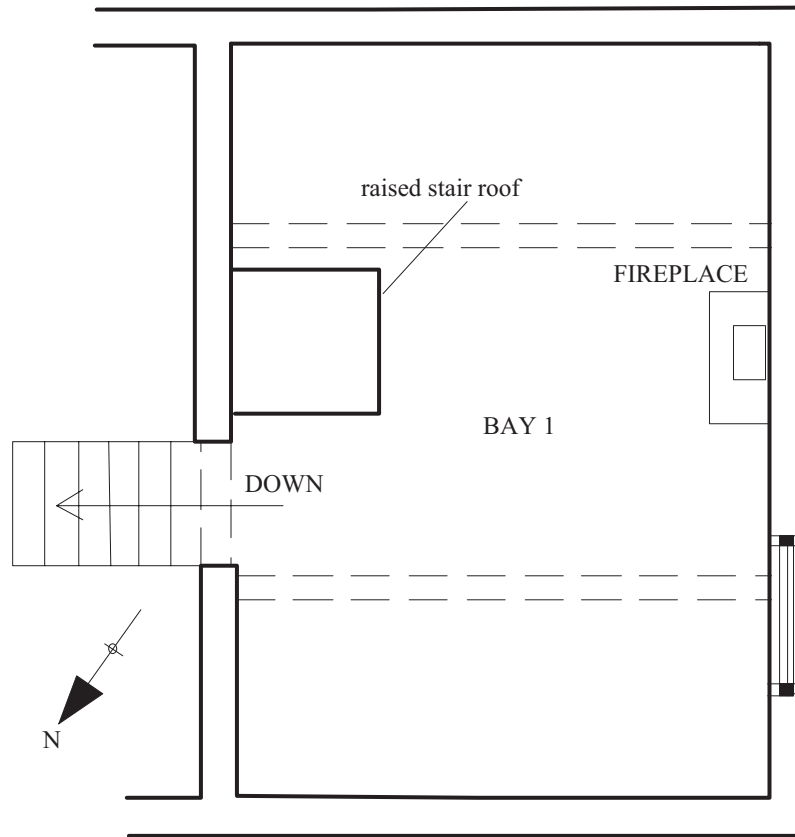


Figure 14: Second Floor Plan 0 2 metres

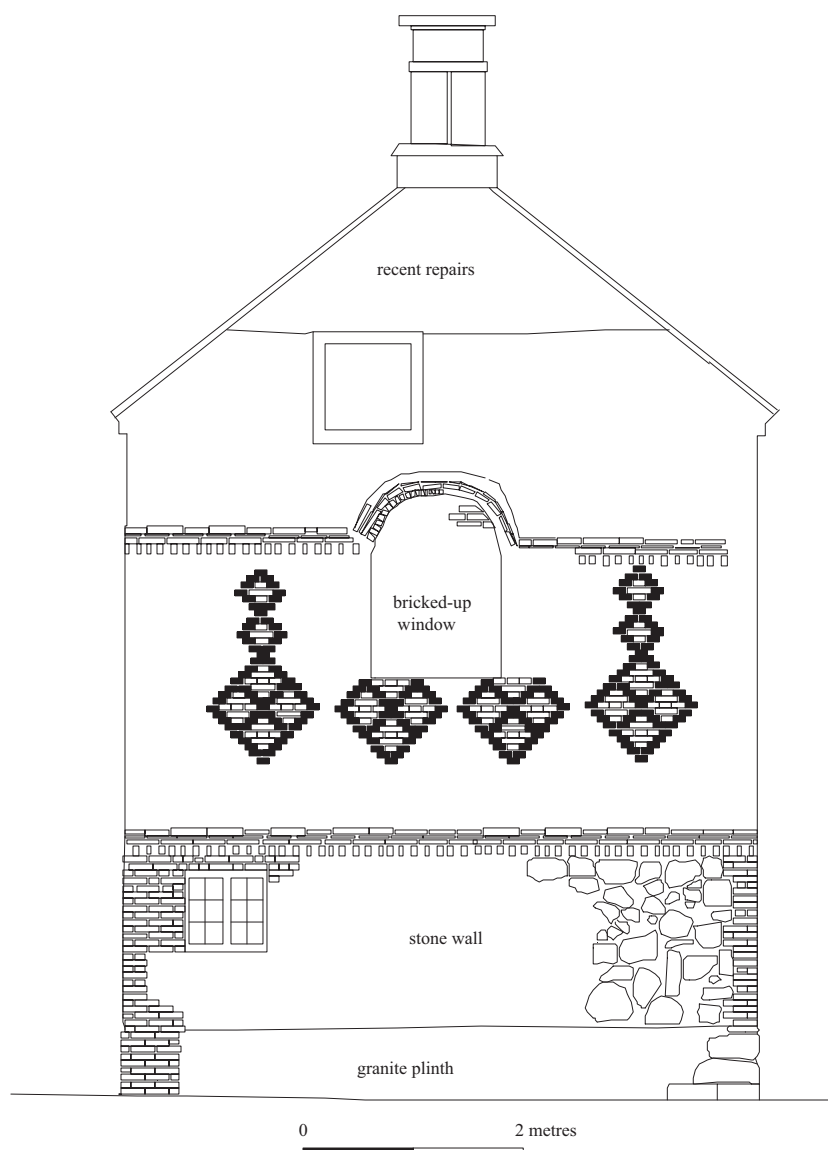


Figure 15: West gable elevation

4.9 The current plan form consists of three bays on the ground floor; two on the 1st floor, there is also a second floor in bay 1.

4.10 Bay 1 on the ground floor (Fig. 12) has a brick floor, a nineteenth century brick fireplace on the west wall, along with a small two-light window. An enclosed staircase, probably also nineteenth century, leads to the first floor, first floor joists are exposed. It has a wide external doorway on the north wall and a recently inserted (2004) internal doorway leading to bay 2. Bay 2 is a narrow room with some stabling facilities against the south wall, an external door on the north wall, and again a recently inserted (2004) internal door leading to bay 3. Bay 3 has stalling surviving on the south wall and an external doorway on the north wall. The ceiling is higher in bays 2 and 3, first floor joists are exposed in both. The original first floor level is indicated by an offset in the east-end wall.

4.11 Bay 1 on the first floor (Fig. 13) has a 19th century brick fireplace on the west wall, a two-light leaded casement window on the south wall, and a recently inserted (2004) window on the north wall. A small flight of straight stairs leads up to a large first floor room spanning bays 2 and 3. It has a large three-light window on the east elevation, and a small straight flight of stairs leads to the second floor of Bay 1. The roof beams are visible in all top floor levels where there is evidence of much reused timber.

4.12 Bay 1 on the second floor (Fig. 14) has a 20th century (listing description) window on the west wall. The wall plate on the north side is a reused timber with various mortises cut into it.

4.13 An L-shaped range of outbuildings is located to the side and rear of the property, elements of which are shown on a map of 1762 (Fig 19). The building gable end on to the street is of an early date, its brickwork comparable with that of the house and standing on a stone plinth; this also includes some simple diaper patterned decoration, which is similar to that seen on the southwest gabled end (Fig.18).



Figures 16 and 17: Bay 3, stable block and Diaper patterning on outhouse.

## 5. Documentary research

5.1 'Anstey' is derived from the Old English word, *anstiga*. This has generally been interpreted as referring to a short or narrow length of road, possibly on a slope or hill (Ekwall 1960 *sub* Anstey). On the basis of topographic comparison, Margaret Gelling (1984, 63-4) has suggested that the place-name refers more specifically to settlements on a short stretch of road with forks at either end. She also noted that many 'Ansteys' were in elevated positions, the Leicestershire Anstey fits both criteria.

5.2 Anstey is first recorded in Domesday Book when it was held by one of the county's largest landholders, Hugh de Grantemesnil, castellan of Leicester. Domesday Book also records that 1 plough and 4 serfs (*servi*) were held by the lord, 13 villeins



and 4 bordars held 2 ploughs, 8 acres of meadow and two stretches of woodland. Anstey was a chapelry of Thurcaston until 1866 when it became an independent parish. Thurcaston also included the hamlet of Cropston. Both Anstey and Cropston were presumably once berewicks or manorial dependencies of Thurcaston. At the time of Domesday Book, both Thurcaston and Anstey manors were held by Hugh Grantemesnil, castellan of Leicester. Domesday records that Hugh had 24 burgesses in Leicester attached to Anstey.

5.3 Robert fitz Parnell, earl of Leicester (1191-1204) granted land and 4 cottages in Anstey to Leicester Abbey (Augustinian). He also granted the abbey the rights to pasturage in that part of Leicester Forest lying between the roads from Leicester to Anstey and Groby. The latter area can be identified with the extra-parochial areas known in modern times as Anstey Pastures, Leicester Frith and Gilroes.

5.4 Leicester Abbey manor was clearly not the only estate in Anstey by the 14th century. The Ferrers family also held a manor in the west. Some of the Ferrers land was granted to Ulverscroft priory in the 1280s and 90s. In the late 13th century, the Cistercian abbey of Garendon was granted rent from two properties in Anstey by Margaret Ferrers. Prior to the Dissolution nearly half, if not more, of the Ferrers manor in Anstey must have been in monastic hands. The Ferrers estates descended by marriage in 1445 to the Grey family (later earls of Stamford). The Greys dwelt in Bradgate House from c.1500 until 1709, after which date they dwelt permanently at Enville in Staffordshire.

5.5 Analysis of the 1762 enclosure map and the 1886 OS 25 inch map suggests that there were two *foci* of settlement in medieval Anstey. Indeed polyfocal villages of various forms and origins are not uncommon in the English landscape (Roberts 1987: 127-50). The earliest focus at Anstey is represented by the tenements lying to the west and east of the church in a roughly linear row settlement. However, the green at the western end of Anstey village clearly forms a second focus of settlement. The east end of Anstey must represent the Domesday village granted to Leicester Abbey. Anstey Green can be interpreted as the heart of the Ferrers/Ulverscroft manor. It seems to have originated around a woodland-pasture common.

5.6 Hartley (1989, 44) has plotted the ridge and furrow in this area. The results suggest that the whole of Anstey except for the village closes and meadow was probably ploughed at some time in the Middle Ages. The 1762 enclosure award mentions nine arable open-fields, six in Anstey parish and three in the parish of Ratby, later Newtown Linford (LRO En/Ax/3/1). Internal evidence in the award makes it possible to work out their extents. In Anstey parish Stocking, Nether and Nothill fields lay north of the village. To the south of Anstey lay Mill field and Groby field (Courtney 2003).

5.7 The earliest cartographic evidence of the building is from the 1762 Enclosure Map of Anstey (Fig. 19). On this map it shows the building in a different plan form to that seen in all later maps. It is shown to be slightly longer, with possibly an extra bay on the north-east end and small projecting block to the rear of this. This corresponds with evidence brought to light during the building survey that has indicated that the current entire northeast wall has been rebuilt. Some of the outbuildings are also present on this map. The 1886 1st edition Ordnance Survey map shows 'The Elms', which was

built in 1835 (see appendix), the building to which this survey relates had been shortened by this time. All outbuildings that exist now (the 'L' shaped range and separate rectangular building beyond this) were extant by this date (Fig. 20). The same arrangement is present on the 1903 with the addition of a small outbuilding north of 'The Elms' (Fig. 21). The 1915 map shows a similar arrangement but the 'L' shaped range is now shown as four separate buildings and a small building to the east is now shown as two separate structures (Fig. 22). No changes are evident on the 1938 map other than more trees being indicated to the north of the area (Fig. 23). By 1968 (Fig. 24) the smallest out-buildings had been demolished and the small rectangular enclosure next to the western range of buildings is not shown.



Figure 18: Enclosure Map of 1762, the application area is that labelled as 'H.Walker'.

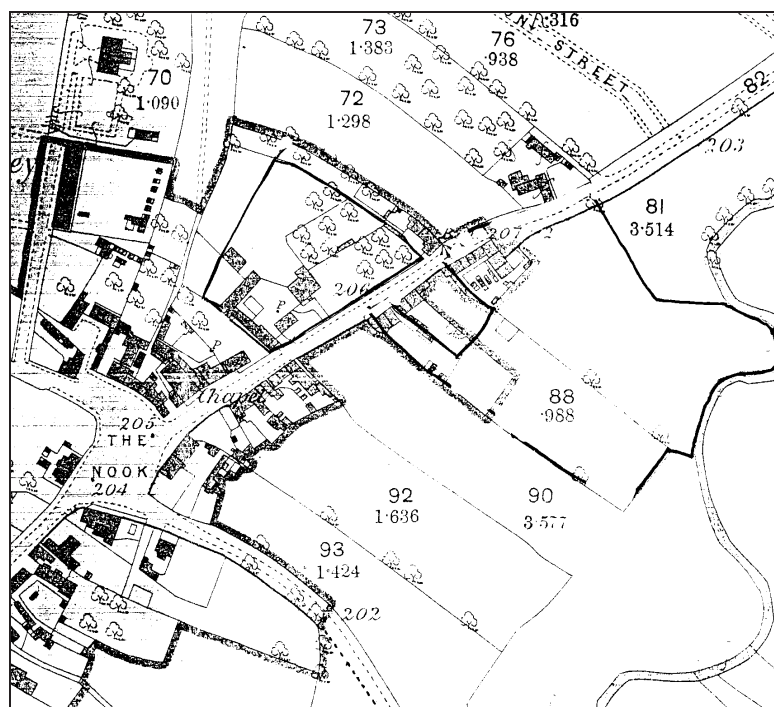


Figure 19: 1886 Ordnance Survey map Leicestershire XXXI.1 with development area outlined (Scale 1:2500)

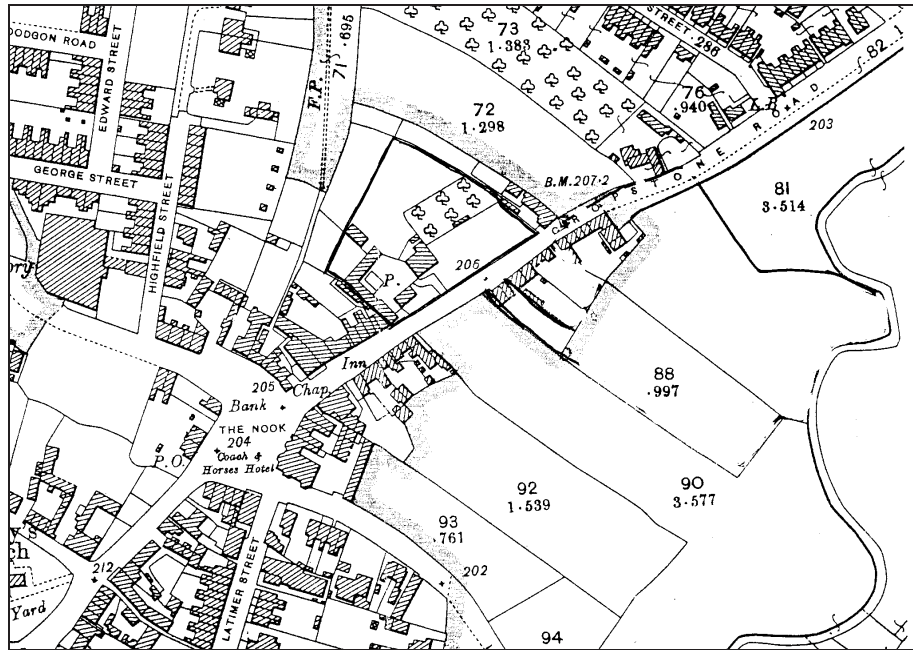


Figure 20: 1903 Ordnance Survey map Leicestershire XXXI.1 with development area outlined (Scale 1:2500)

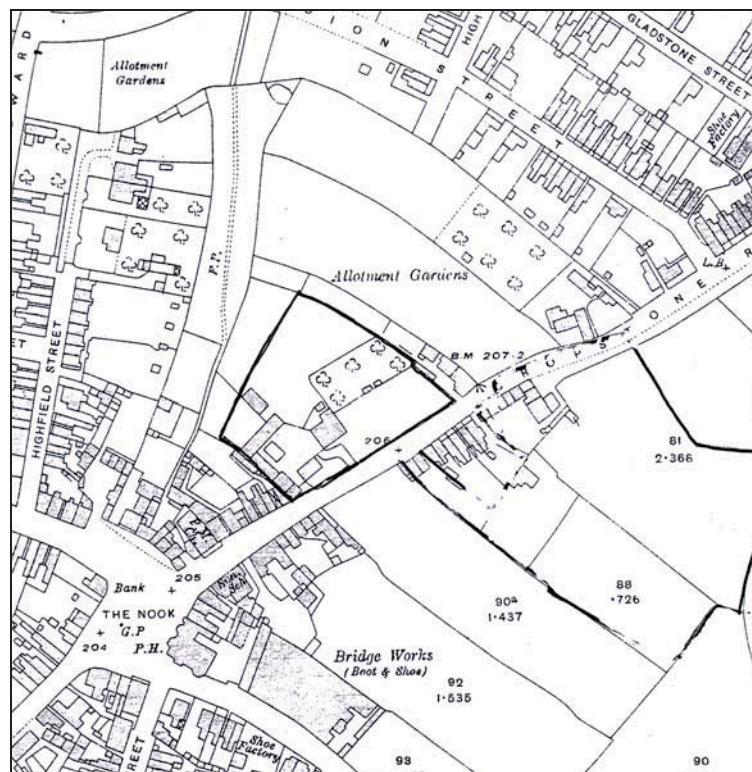


Figure 21: 1915 Ordnance Survey map Leicestershire XXXI.1 with development area outlined (Scale 1:2500)



Figure 22: 1938 Ordnance Survey map Leicestershire XXXI.1 with development area outlined (Scale 1:2500)

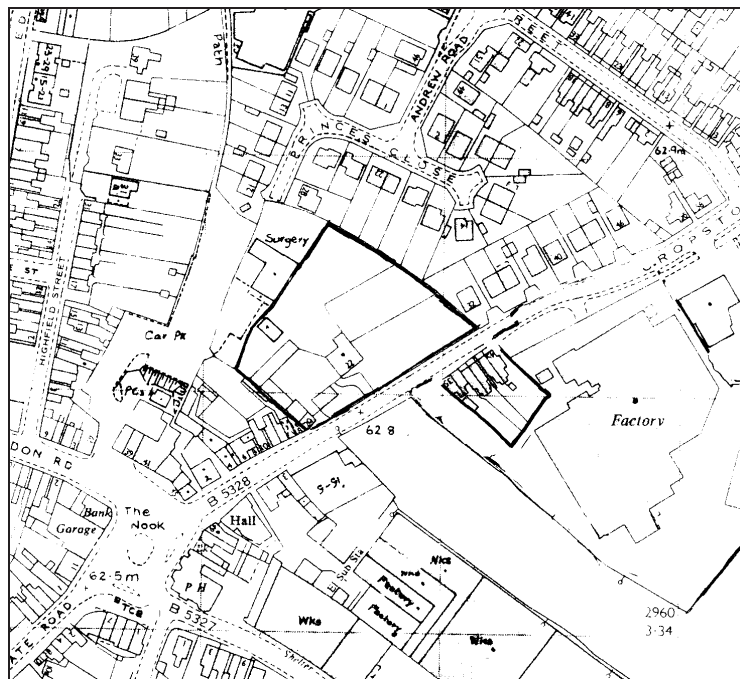


Figure 23: 1968 Ordnance Survey map with development area outlined (Scale 1:1250)  
Reproduced from the OS map SK5508NW 1:1250 map by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 1968. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 10002186.

## 6. Conclusion

The building survey has indicated that the former farmhouse at 22 Cropston Road, Anstey is regionally significant, in that it is one of only a few surviving examples of the 'Wreake Valley' style of building. It retains the characteristic projecting moulded stringcourses which are swept up into arches over the blocked-up windows and diaper patterned brickwork.

The building was evidently originally longer with at least one more bay at the east end. It was shortened in the nineteenth century when a new house, 'The Elms' was constructed, in 1835/6. This building (formerly the principle dwelling) was then converted into a stable block serving the new house. The roof structure was modified and original doors and windows were blocked up. The chimneystack was removed and the first floor structure altered. New doorways were introduced on the north elevation which then effectively became the principal front of the building.

The development sequence illustrates how buildings alter over time, not just physically, but in terms of their social status and function. Built in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century as the fashionable home of a prosperous yeoman farmer it was subsequently relegated to accommodation for horses and servants. Ironically, it may be for precisely this reason that the decorative attributes have survived on the south and east elevations. Other Wreake Valley style houses had their string courses and 'eyebrows' removed in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries as fashions changed. An example of this is the former farmhouse on Church Street, Seagrave, which retains characteristic Wreake Valley style decoration on its rear elevation and one gable end, but had its front elevation remodelled in the nineteenth century. Had the building at Anstey remained the principle residence it may well have been similarly 'updated'.

## 7. Archive

The archive consists of 1 sheet of permatrace, site notes, black and white prints and colour slides and will be held by Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services under the Accession Number X.A.172. 2004.

## 8. Acknowledgements

This report was compiled from information collected on site by the author. Dr. Patrick Clay managed the project. Advice on historic buildings was provided by Neil Finn.

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01.11.2004

## Appendix

### Listing Description: Former Farmhouse, 22 Cropston Road Anstey.

Location : ANSTEY, CHARNWOOD, LEICESTERSHIRE  
Photographer : Mr Brian R. Screamon  
IoE number : 355259  
Date listed : 28 JUL 1994  
Date of last amendment : 28 JUL 1994

The following building  
shall be added to the list;

	ANSTEY	CROPSTON ROAD
SK 50 NE		
		(north side)
6/10000		The Elms,
		number 22
GV		II

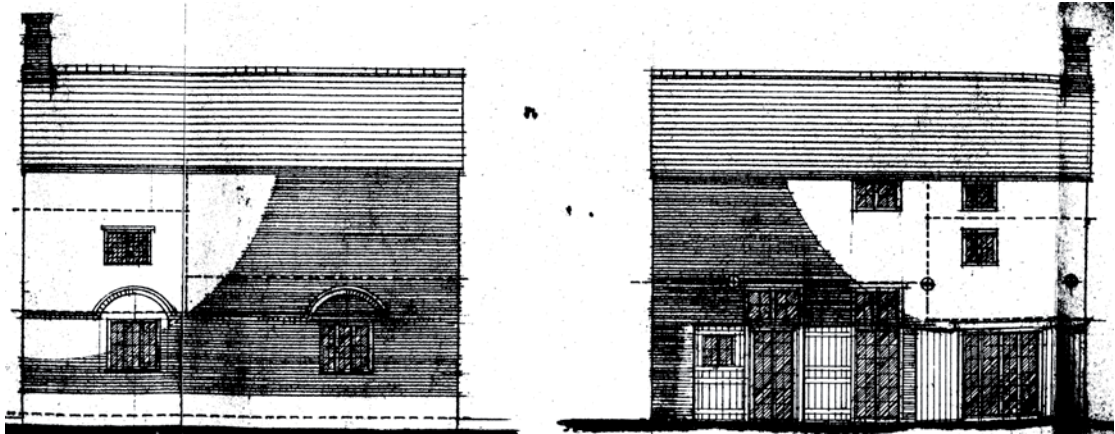
House. 1835/6. For Samuel Burchall, a local brewer. Buff brick in Flemish bond with Swithland slate roof and brick end stacks. 2 storeys; 3-window range of 2/2 sashes under gauged brick lintels. Central doorway with 6-panel door, overlight and bootscrapers up stone steps. 2 wings to rear have some windows with horizontal sliding glazing- bar sashes. Interior retains marble hall floor, stick-baluster staircase with wreathed handrail, 2 marble fireplaces and 6 and 4-panel doors. The land was acquired in 1834, the house built by Daniel Simpson and it was first rated in 1836. (Information from owner, great grand daughter of Samuel Burchall).

### Listing Description: 'The Elms', 22 Cropston Road Anstey.

Location : ANSTEY, CHARNWOOD, LEICESTERSHIRE  
IoE number : 189060  
Date listed : 21 NOV 1980  
Date of last amendment : 21 NOV 1980

	ANSTEY	CROPSTON ROAD (North side)
SK 50 NE		
6/9		Outbuilding c 6m S.W.
21.II.80		of No. 22
		II

House, now outbuilding, of c 1700, altered and heightened mid C19. Red brick part diapered, with granite rubble stone on lower left end, brick eaves and moulded and dentilled brick stringcourse segmentally arched over blocked openings. Swithland slate roof with rebuilt brick left end stack. 2½ storeys, 2 blocked openings, with 2-light leaded casement 1st floor left. On left end a small 2-light window with blocked window over and C20 window in attic. On right end a 1st floor 3-light window. Double and single stable doors to rear.



Figures 24 & 25: Proposed front and rear elevations (Haywood Exclusive Homes).

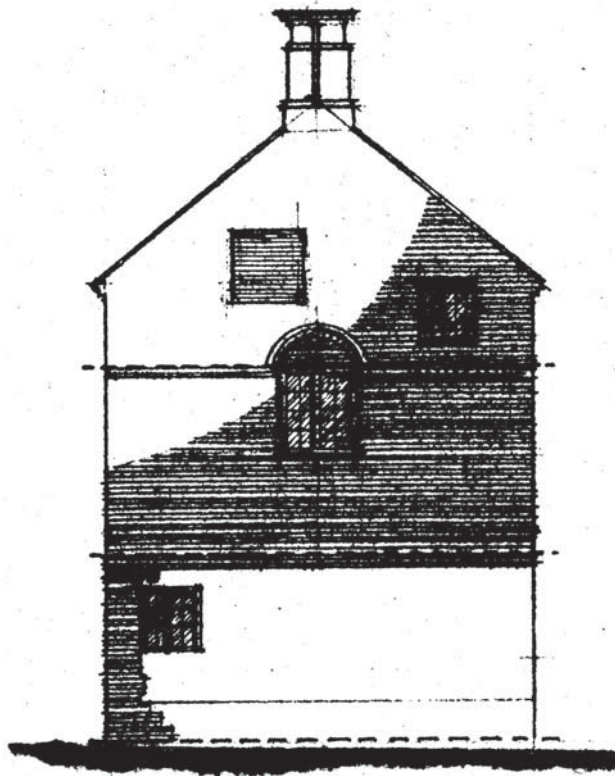


Figure 26: Proposed gable elevation (Haywood Exclusive Homes).



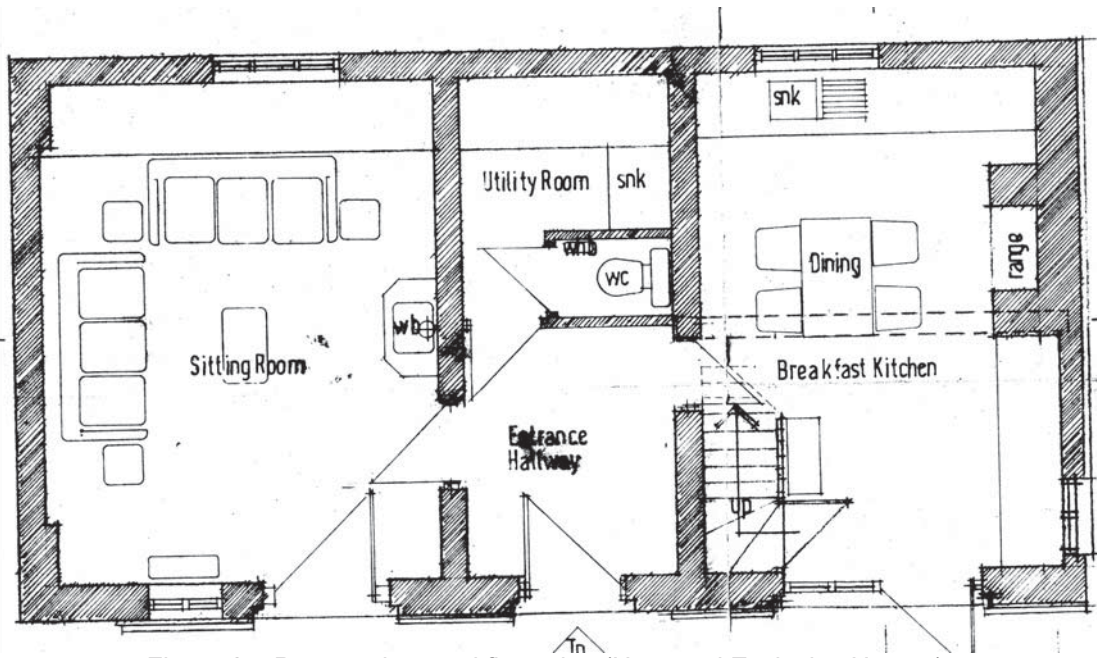


Figure 27: Proposed ground floor plan (Haywood Exclusive Homes).

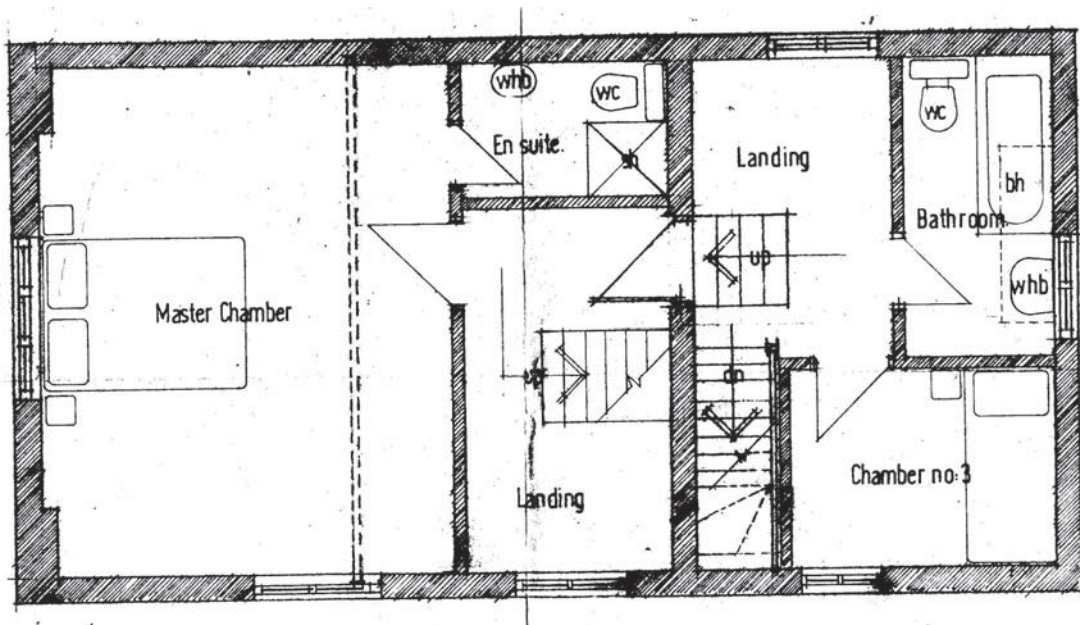


Figure 28: Proposed first floor plan (Haywood Exclusive Homes).

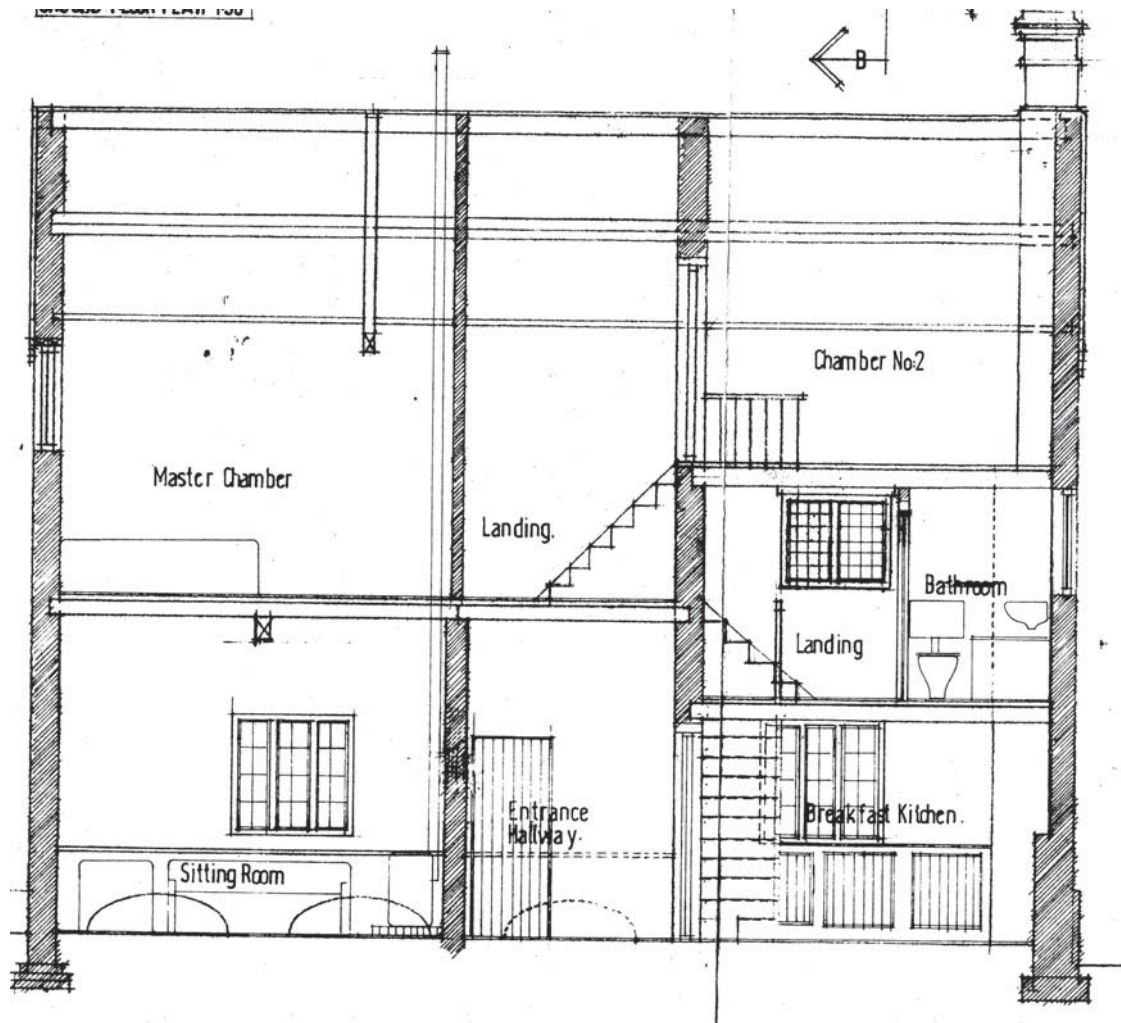


Figure 29: Long section through cottage after proposed alterations (Haywood Exclusive Homes).

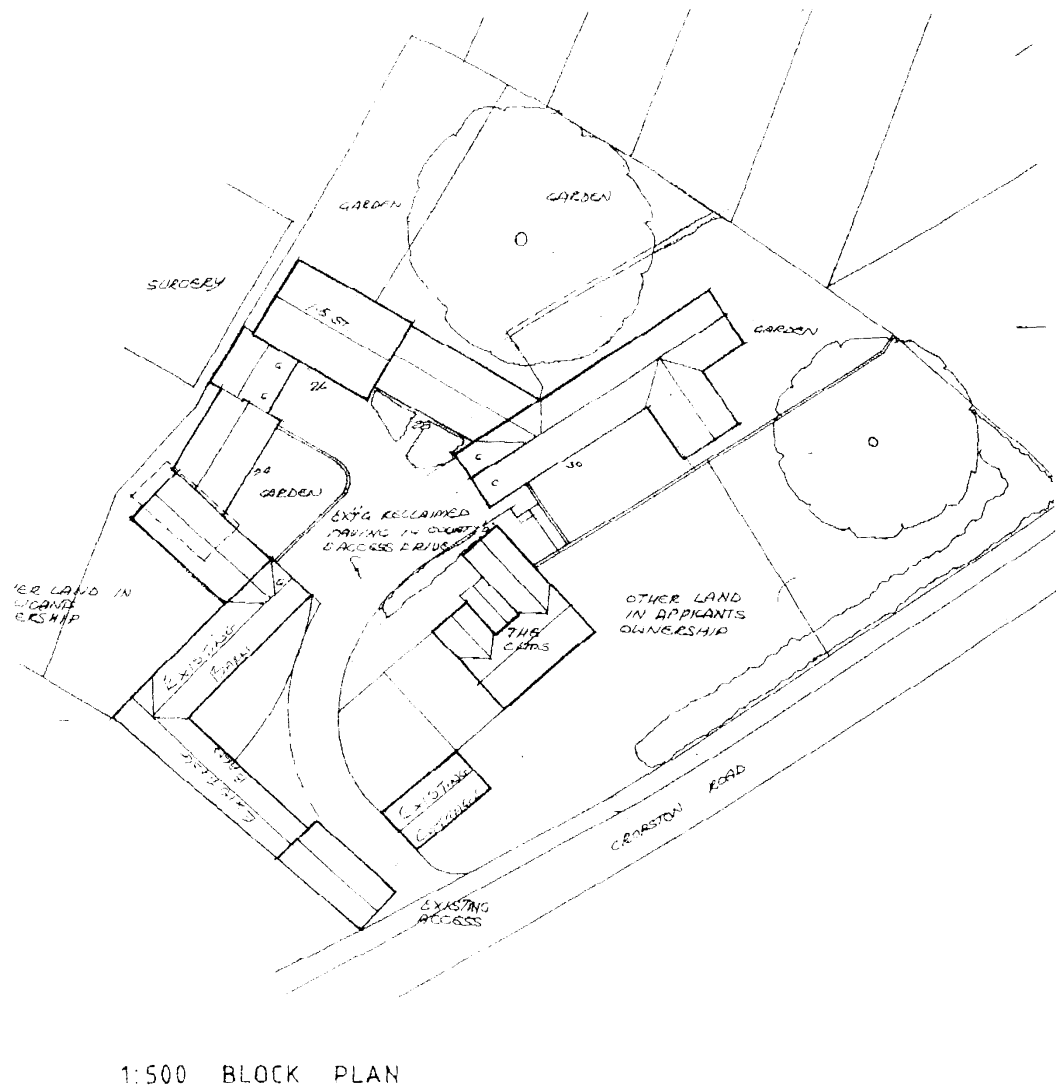


Figure 30: Proposed residential development at Cropston Road Anstey. Scale 1:500 (from Haywood Exclusive Homes Ltd).