

**An Historic Building and
Archaeological Impact Assessment
of Ravenstone Farm,
Higham on the Hill,
Leicestershire
NGR SP 383 954**

David Smith and Rob Hayward, TRP
on behalf of ULAS

For Stoneleigh Planning

Checked by Project Manager	
Signed:	Date 19.7.05
Name:	

University of Leicester Archaeological Services

Report 2005/078 ©2005

CONTENTS

<i>SUMMARY</i>	1
INTRODUCTION	1
AIMS and OBJECTIVES	2
METHODOLOGY	2
LOCATION	3
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	4
BUILDING DESCRIPTION	5
Farm Plan Type	5
Farmhouse	6
The Outbuildings	9
IMPACT ASSESSMENT	12
Farmhouse	12
Outbuildings : Barns A, B, C	14
REFERENCES	15
APPENDIX ONE	16
KEY PLANS – Ravenstone Farmhouse and Outbuildings	16
APPENDIX TWO	20
Plans and Drawings of Ravenstone Farm received from Ian Neale Homes Ltd, Tennant Street, Nuneaton	20

An Historic Building and Archaeological Impact Assessment of the Grade II listed building known as Ravenstone Farm, Higham-on-the-Hill Leicestershire

NGR: SP 383 954

David Smith and Rob Hayward TRP on behalf of ULAS

SUMMARY

The University of Leicester Archaeological Services asked TR Projects to undertake an archaeological impact assessment of Ravenstone Farm, Higham-on-the-Hill. Ravenstone Farm conforms to the conventional Midland Courtyard Farm plan. In this case this consists of a late 18th or very early 19th century three-storey brick farmhouse forming the farm's street frontage with a rear range of two storey brick. A series of 19th century brick outbuildings buildings, some of which may contain fragments of earlier, 18th century brickwork, are ranged around the other three sides of the farmyard. From 1736 to at least 1923 Ravenstone Farm formed part of the estate of the Ravenstone Hospital, an establishment founded by Mr John Wilkins of Ravenstone Hall in 1711 and given substantial financial support from the estate of his wife, Rebecca Wilkins, d.1712.

The late 18th century brick farmhouse seems to respect some structural material of an earlier house inasmuch as it respects and uses the sandstone cellaring of an earlier house. In addition the joists supporting the floor of the room over the cellaring are re-used structural timbers from a timber-framed house. In addition a series of domestic doors are identified as being considerably older than the farmhouse.

The outbuilding ranges show evidence of being largely built during the first half of the 19th century, though there is tentative evidence in some areas to suggest the present buildings may be raised from the graded bases of earlier, 18th century outbuildings. The present range of outbuildings contain substantial evidence of 'make do and mend' repairs rather than large scale, repair maintenance, this may be indicative of tenant rather than estate repairs. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the two-storey, three-bay, brick, barn situated on the south-east side of the yard.

INTRODUCTION

This document is an historic building assessment of the group of buildings known as Ravenstone Farm situated in the main street of Higham-on-the-Hill, Leicestershire, a village lying within the area administered by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council. Ravenstone Farm is a Grade II Listed Building and the range of farm buildings situated within the yard area are deemed to lie within the curtilage of the Listed Building.

The historic building assessment includes an initial desk-based assessment of the plans provided and subsequent, on-site, non-intrusive investigation of the impact proposed works may have on the historic fabric of the buildings. Key Plans relating to both the farmhouse and the outbuildings which also show areas of impact on what is considered historic fabric are included as *Appendix One* of this Report.

AIMS and OBJECTIVES

The aim of this assessment is to provide information on the history, character, form and relative quality of the entire range of buildings on this site that are referred to as Ravenstone Farm. By identifying and describing any significant features it is hoped to provide information that may help guide the preparation of an appropriate mitigation strategy.

All the work of the historic building assessment follows the Institute of Field Archaeologist's Code of Conduct.

METHODOLOGY

The following sources have been consulted in the course of preparing this Report.

1. Previous Ordnance Survey and other maps of the area, [Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Record Office, *hereafter* LLRRO]
2. Plans of the existing and proposed development [Neale Developments, Nuneaton] Archives and Records relating to Ravenstone Hospital, Leicestershire, *hereafter* LLRRO ref: DG 32/-.
3. Various Trade Directories – Leicestershire
4. Historical background material, including Trade Directories and Local Studies pamphlets (University of Leicester Library)

The survey methodology for this historic building assessment has involved undertaking a detailed inspection of the historic building and an assessment of the significance of surviving fixtures and fittings.

It has also involved the compiling of an itemised breakdown of the proposed alterations to the historic building and an appraisal of the extent and significance of the impact of proposed works on the fabric of the Listed Building.

The survey also endeavoured to identify areas that may be considered to require further investigation or specific recording and provide the appropriate justification.

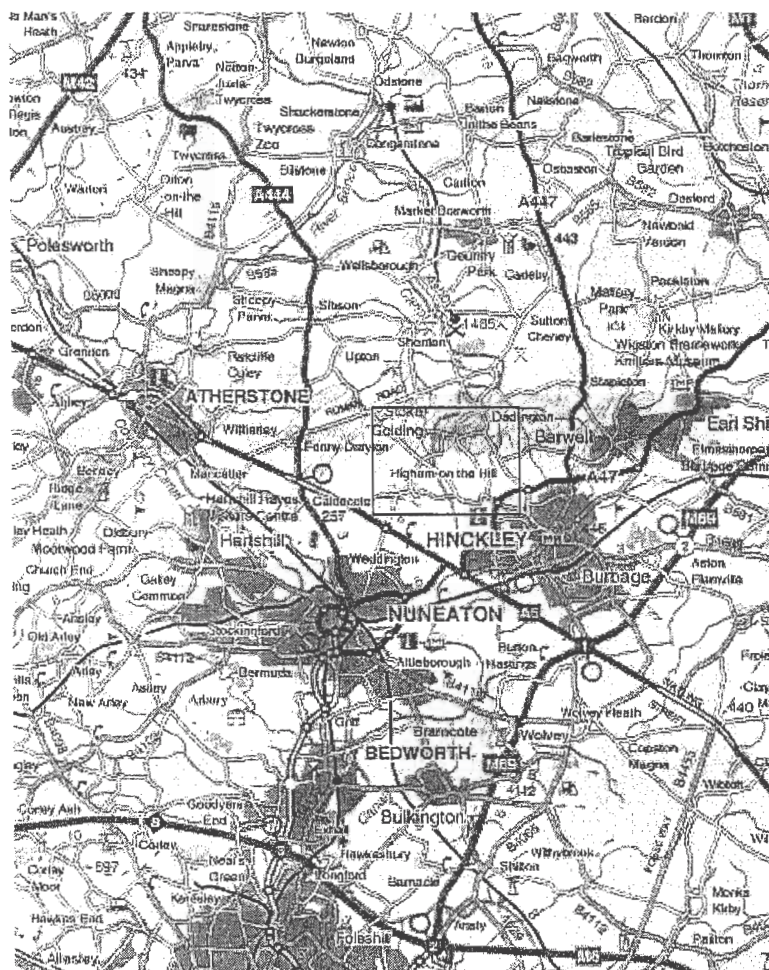


Fig.1 Location : Higham-on-the-Hill

By permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright 1980. All rights reserved.
Licence number AL 100021186.

LOCATION

Higham-on-the-Hill, (also referred to in the text as Higham), is a village situated 4.9 kms, (3 miles) west-north-west of Hinckley, 8 kms, (5 miles) south of Atherstone, 9.7kms, (6 miles) south-west of Market Bosworth. To the south-west the parish boundary is also the county boundary with Warwickshire and is defined by the historic Roman road - Watling Street, [A 5], (see Fig 1 – Location: Higham-on-the-Hill). Higham is one of a series of Leicestershire villages that was Enclosed 'by agreement' (1632) subsequent legal requirements meant Enclosure by Act of Parliament had to undertaken in 1806¹

Ravenstone Farm is situated on the south-east side of the village main street at the south-west end of the historic settlement, and is approximately 120metres (100 yards) from the lane leading to Nuneaton, (see Fig.2, below), some of its lands extended southwards from the rear of the Home Close. A series of brick, farm buildings are arranged around the east, west and south sides of an open courtyard arrangement with the farmhouse and a street access point situated on the north side of the yard.

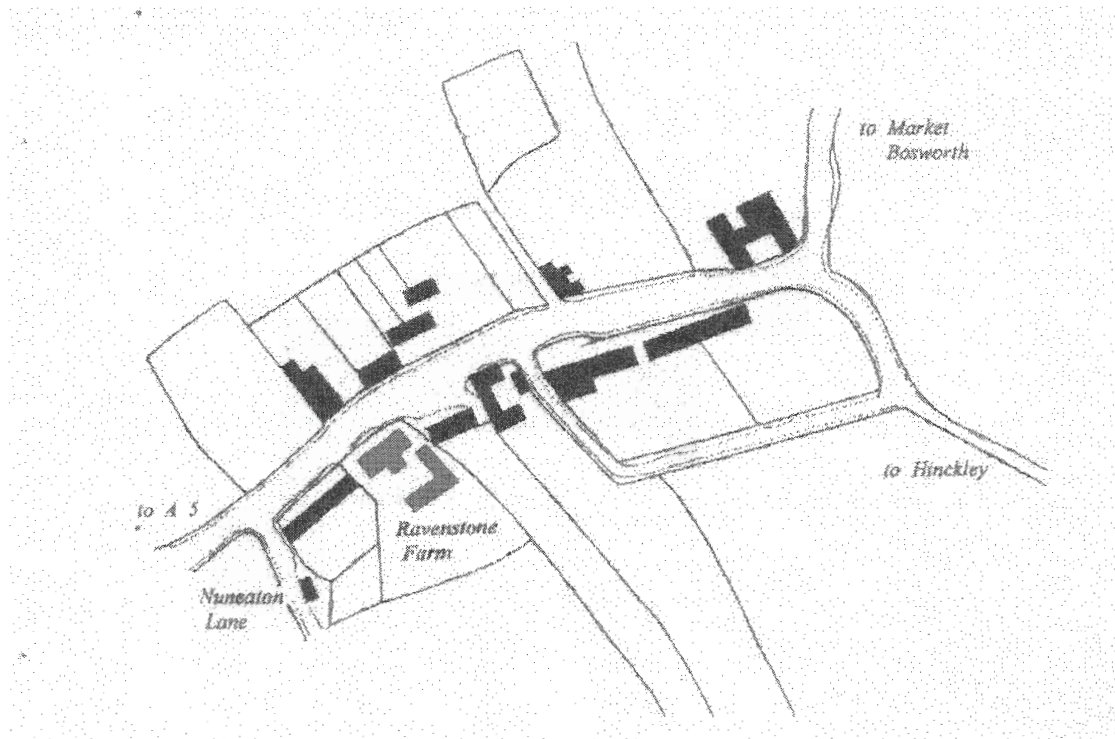


Fig.2 Location : Ravenstone Farm, Higham-on-the-Hill Enlarged detail based on a map of Higham produced from a survey by J. Eagle, 1807, for the Enclosure Award, LLRRO Ref: QS/47/2/9
(Ravenstone Farm is highlighted in red)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Ravenstone Farm - Archives

The naming of a farm at Higham-on-the-Hill in west Leicestershire after Ravenstone, a village situated 20kms (12½ miles) further north in the county requires explanation. The answer lies in the philanthropic activities of John Wilkins of Ravenstone Hall and his wife, Rebecca. In 1711 John Wilkins established a Hospital for 30 poor women and three maid-servants at Ravenstone. Nichols refers to an inscription bearing John Wilkins's coat of arms that is mounted on the Hospital Chapel, this records the foundation being "...liberally endowed by Rebecca his wife, in memory of their only son...who died...February...1711"² Rebecca Wilkins died the following year, 1712, and her Will, which Nichols publishes a full transcript of, contains references to the establishing of a substantial income for the Hospital by means of a series of existing and future investments that were to be made in the interests of Ravenstone Hospital.

The Ravenstone Hospital records include a series of 'broken runs' of Rental Accounts relating to properties owned by the Hospital, the earliest run covers the years 1726-1759.³ The first reference to a farm at Higham-on-the-Hill as part of the Hospital's estate occurs in 1736 and then runs continuously to 1759. References to the rent from a farm at Higham occur throughout the one hundred and sixteen year span from 1797 to 1913, the last year for which Accounts were identified and there can be no doubt the farm at Higham was in the Hospital's continuous ownership throughout that entire period. Unfortunately what has survived are the

Rent Accounts and not the detailed year-on-year estate ledger accounts. As a consequence little specific information relating to repairs has survived. The exception being when the cost of repairs are set against the Rent to be paid by the tenant to the Hospital. In 1798 the rent of the farm at Higham was increased from £39 to £50 per year to recover “..money paid out in buildings.” From Lady Day 1808 the Rent was increased by a further £27.15.0 *p.a.*, “by Agreement” to recover the sum of £ 693.15.4 paid out by the Hospital Trustees for “...exonerating the Estate from Tithes.” In 1848 the annual rent was increased by £1.7.6 in order to recover £55.17.6 paid by the Trustees for “...Draining” but in 1894 the annual rent was reduced to £76 *per annum* to compensate for the costs of repairs that must have been undertaken by William Kendall who was tenant of the farm at that time. Of all these entries, the substantial increase introduced in 1798 may be the most significant as it may identify the date when the new, street elevation of Ravenstone Farm was raised.

Partial List of Tenants of Ravenstone Farm, Higham-on-the-Hill

Tenants identified in the various parts of the Ravenstone Hospital Accounts,^x with dates of earliest and latest entries:

1736	Thomas Moore	1759	[document run finishes]
1797	James Reeve	1833	- rent paid by <i>Executors of Mr Reeve</i>
1834	Mr Reeve Jun ^r	1840	- rent paid by <i>Executors of Mr Reeve</i>
1840	James Reeve Jun ^r	1853	[document run finishes]
1893	William Kendall	1902	
1902	Sydney Marson	1907	
1907	George Adcock		
	becomes Adcock Bros	1913	[document run finishes]

It is not known when the farm became known as Ravenstone Farm, it is never referred to as such in the Hospital Accounts and none of the 19th and 20th century Trade Directories refer to it as such either.

BUILDING DESCRIPTION

Ravenstone Farm is identified as a Grade II Listed Building on the DCMS (Department of Culture, Media and Sport), List of Historic Buildings, describing it as:

House. Late C18. Red brick; slate roof; brick end stacks. 3 storeys with brick eaves cornice. Regular 3 window front, narrower in centre; large early C20 casements with blind segmental heads to ground and first floors. central flush panel door with transom light over.

None of the range of outbuildings are mentioned in the Listing Description.

Farm Plan Type

Ravenstone Farm is a characteristic Midland Courtyard Farm plan in which the farmhouse occupies one side of a four sided layout and a series of buildings including a barn, byres, milking parlours, stables, pig styes, stock pens, stores and wagon hovels range around the other three sides. The entire complex of buildings are ranged around a cobbled yard that originally had a ‘midden’ or ‘muck hole’ as its central feature, (*see Fig.3, below*).

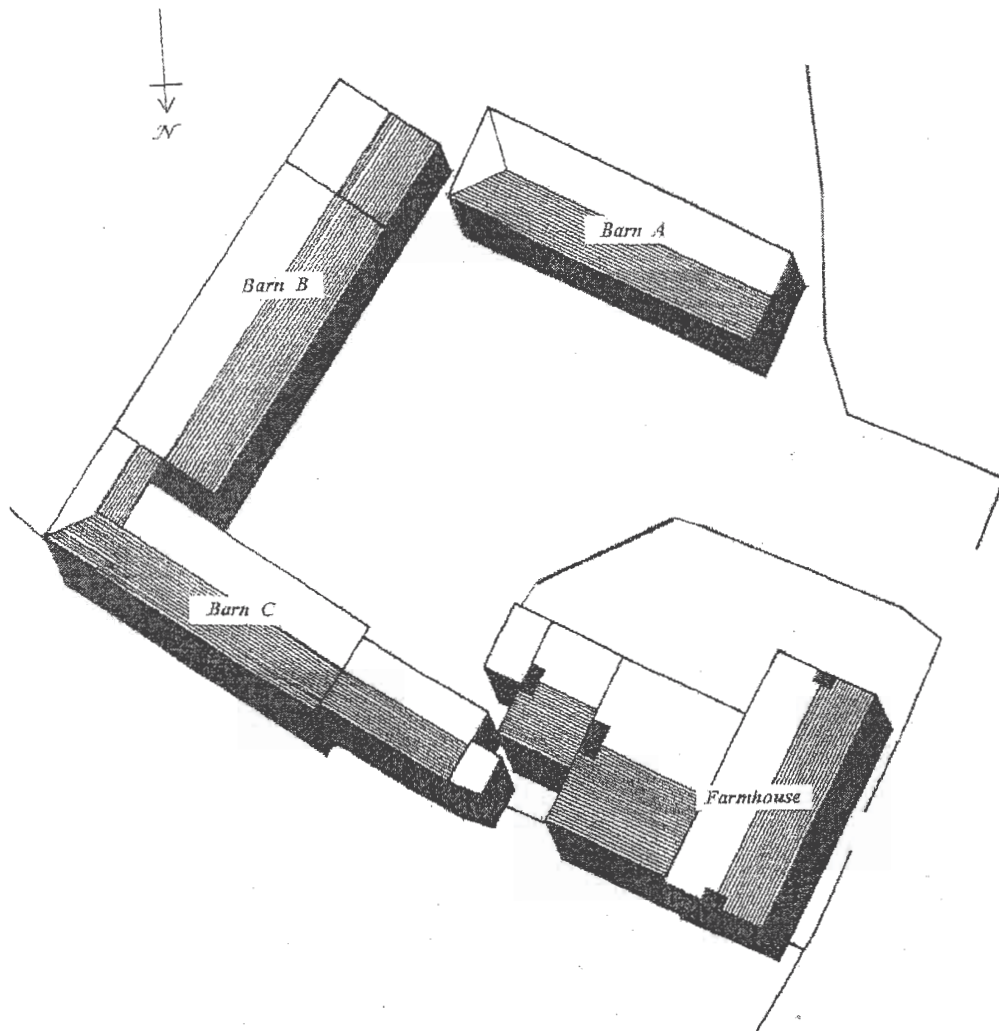


Fig.3 Ravenstone Farm, block plan layout of farm and outbuildings referred to in this report.

Farmhouse

Notes

(1. The 'Existing' Plans received did not identify farmhouse rooms by name or number. The room numbering used in this report relate to numbers given to identify features during the course of the Desk-top Assessment, these are identified on the Key Plans - Appendix One.

2. The drawings of the farmhouse and associated outbuildings identify the various elevations by cardinal points of the compass. The actual elevations lie at 20° variance with these orientations. For convenience sake the compass orientations identified on the Drawings Received are used for these notes.)

External (Elevations see Plates 1,2 and Key Plans)

The present farmhouse is of an L-plan form consisting of a three storey, street facing range which is one room deep. At the rear of this range a two storey range extends at right angles. The greater part of this range is two rooms deep. All the details contained in the Listing Description relate to the street facing elevation of the property. The brickwork of the main elevation is raised in courses of Flemish Bond, the side and rear elevations include several

sections of Flemish Garden Wall Bond. A small, walled off area originally formed a laundry garden in the return angle of the L-plan.

Internal

Basement

The front range of the farmhouse is partly set over cellars whose walls are chiefly formed of dressed sandstone with six or more courses of brick rising from this stone base, (*see Plates 3, 4*). The joists for the ground floor room, *G 1*, which is situated over the cellar, are pocketed into the brickwork. The relationship of the cellar brickwork with the stonework would indicate the brickwork relates to the present, late 18th century brick building. The joists supporting the ground floor of the room that is situated over the cellar carry tell-tale evidence in the form of raked and square mortises, stale holes and vee-grooves to indicate they are sections of wall-posts and side-wall framing recovered from a substantial, timber-framed building.

Ground Floor – Front Range

The front range of rooms, *G 1* and *G 3*, contain few diagnostic details. In *G 1*, a fireplace surround with patarae stops and raised mouldings is characteristic of a popular design form of the closing decades of the 18th and early years of the 19th century, the tiled surround and grate are considerably later. In *G 3*, the fireplace with dry-cupboards set into the rear, wall and a straight bressumer, now exposed, but probably originally supporting a shelf, is consistent with a similar dating. Both *G 1* and *G 3* have longitudinal spine beams with under-drawn ceilings.

The staircase rising from the Entrance Hall, *G 2*, has stick balusters with a rounded handrail and standard, deep, treads and risers, all of a pattern and form consistent with an early 19th century date, (*see Plate 5*).

Ground Floor - Rear Range, *G 4*, *G 5* and *G 6*. (*see Plates 6, 7, 8*)

A door at the rear of the Entrance Hall give access into a large, Kitchen/Living Room area, *G 4*, which is lit by two windows set into the side-wall overlooking the Yard area. External examination of the brickwork of the window nearest to the three storey range reveals it previously been a doorway and was probably converted to a window when the additional, short, scullery bay was added to the farmhouse. *G 4*, has a large, hooded fireplace supported by a straight, fireplace bressumer at its south-east end. This fireplace has been subjected to a number of alterations and now has a modern brick installation with a copper effect, metal hood set over a domestic grate inserted in it. One of the original dry cupboards, with contemporary drawer underneath, has been retained on the right-hand side of the fireplace. As well as the access door leading from the entrance hall there are three doors leading off this area of the house. One door leads into a scullery area, *G 8*, behind the chimney breast, the other two doors are set into the wall dividing the area of *G 4* from a parallel unit, *G 6*, on the east side of the range,. There are also a pair of panelled, cupboard doors set in the wall between the two doors. One of the doors leads into *G 5*, an area converted into a toilet suite which has lost any diagnostic details it may once have contained. The other door leads into a Dairy-cum-Pantry store, *G 6*, unusually set on the south-east side of the house, (*see Plate 7*). A brick thrawl runs across the rear wall of this area and two, sandstone cheese-press stones stand on the floor in the middle of this area. In addition there are a series of wooden shelves supported by wooden horn brackets and the back of cupboard which accessed from *G 4*, (*see Plate 8*) A transverse, chamfered beam passes across *G 6*, this beam is supported at its outside end by an overlarge timber which also serves as a mullion for a three-light window, sliding sash window.

The two doors set in the side wall between *G 4* and *G 6* are two of a series of similar doors located throughout the house and discussed in greater detail in Section Plank and Batten Doors, p 8. Room *G 4* has a transverse, beam spanning it which has been strapped and boxed. The ceiling has been underdrawn so no joists are visible.

Behind *G 4* is the Scullery area, *G 7*. External examination shows this unit to be an addition to the original, rear range, the main feature within it is another fireplace which has a shallow, brick hood over it. The fireplace bressummer, which is of elm, is straight. This area also contains a boxed in, deal, service staircase leading to the first floor area. Beyond the Scullery there is a small brick outbuilding with mono-pitch roof that appears to have been built originally to accommodate as an earth closet existed at the end of Barn C, this toilet must relate to the time when mains drainage was installed in the village.

First Floor

A small landing at the head of the stairs, *F 2*, provides access to the two front bed-chambers *F 1* and *F 3*, and by means of a small landing gives access to two further bedchambers, *F 7* and *F 8*, situated in the rear range of the house. The rear range also contains a bathroom, *F 6*, and a further chamber situated over the Scullery. This latter area is now used as for storage. The entire First Floor area has deal, boarded floors. The bed-chambers *F 1*, *F 3* and *F 8* have fireplaces let into their respective chimney breasts. *F 7* now appears to be an un-heated chamber with a passageway running through it between *F 5* and *F 9*, an arrangement caused by the introduction of a bathroom suite, *F 6*, and its associated partitioning. The position of the single window which now lights both *F 6* and *F 7*, would indicate the three areas *F 5*, *F 6* and *F 7*, were originally a single, open space. There is a 'void' area, which may have been used for storage, adjacent to the side of the chimney breast in *F 7*, (*see Plate 9*). An extended single, oak, king-post truss, with raked struts, spans the width of this range of building. The tie-beam is scarfed and supported by the partition wall between *F 5/7* and *F 8*. The rake of the chimney breast in *F 8* appears to have been screened off to form a cupboard the back of which was subsequently broken through to provide access from both *F 8* and *F 9*.

F 9, forms the single chamber at the end of this range. It is lit by a single, three light window overlooking the farm-yard. This room can be accessed by the service stairs rising from the Scullery or by passing through *F 7*. As far as can be identified, this chamber is floored with wide, hardwood boards. The hooded, chimney breast from the Scullery fireplace passes up the gable wall of this chamber, (*see Plate 10*).

In considering the organisation of the house the lack of partitioning for the Scullery staircase at *F 9* and the original open area *F 5*, *F 6*, and *F 7*, suggests they were probably intended as service and/or storage accommodation. However the rise in mechanisation and commensurate decline in the number of staff required to run a farm during the course of the twentieth century means that here, as in many other farmhouses, the demand for in-house accommodation for house and farm servants had virtually disappeared by the 1950s. This shift left an abundance of accommodation which became refuges for miscellaneous items for which there might be some future, but un-defined need, *F 9* appeared to fulfil that role. In other cases, such as the third floor accommodation, it simply became too remote to use for storage and was largely abandoned. Inevitably lack of use brought about deterioration in fabric which is manifest in the second floor area of the farmhouse.

Second Floor

The basic nature of fittings and accommodation at this level of the house suggest their use as sleeping accommodation was largely secondary to the overall needs of the farm. The flues of the gable-set chimney stacks pass through *S 1* and *S 3* respectively, but at this level both chambers are dependent on ambient heating rather than a fireplace. *S 3* is unique within the house in having a lime-ash plaster floor. *S 1* is illuminated by a single, floor-based, three-light window, *S 3* originally had floor based, three light windows at both front and rear, but the latter has been removed. Both chamber doors appear to have been relocated from more significant rooms at lower levels of the house.

The door giving access into *S 1* is a six-panel form with two rectangular panels at top and bottom and a pair of narrow, rectangular panels in the centre, (see *Plate X*). Alcock and Hall record similar arrangements on panelled doors of the first half of the 18th century,⁵

Plank and Batten Doors (see *Plates 11, 12*)

The door giving access to *S 3* is of a similar pattern to two doors already referred to, that are set in the partition wall between *G 4* and *G 5*, *G 6*, and another example at *F 1*, like all these doors *S 3* is a plank and batten door in which the planks either have moulded edges or are narrower and cambered.* The doors are all hung on strap hinges. Each of the four doors is slightly different in the arrangement of its planking, but in every case the moulding is identical. Some of the doors now have trimmers attached at either top or bottom or both, these probably relate to their relocation. The door at *S 3*, (see *Plate 12*), has a 19th century oak cased lock and a simple wooden, finger latch which Alcock & Hall show similar examples of from dated houses of the 1620s, though this arrangement was used continuously until its 'revival' in the 'Arts & Crafts' period of the late 19th century.⁶ The presence of two keyholes at the hanging edge of this door indicate it has been turned round. In this example the strap hinges are set on pingle hooks mounted into the door-frame, at *F 1* the door is hung on strap hinges with base plates.

The basic arrangement of a series of moulded and cambered plan sections on a series of four, fixed battens may suggest an element of pre-fabrication which can be arranged to meet client requirements. The differing arrangements may indicate distinct social differentiations within the property or merely client preference, whichever, their message is now confused by the doors having been relocated.

Alcock & Hall provide no comparative examples to this pattern of door, though all the plank and batten series with moulded sections they show are related to dated properties of the 17th century and this would seem an acceptable dating for the four examples recorded at Higham. They would appear to be re-cycled pieces that probably relate to the timber framed building fragments of which were re-used as joists in the cellars.

The Outbuildings

(The Plans received identify three major outbuildings identified as both Barns A, B and C. and Plots 3, 4 and 5 respectively. The following notes have used the terms A, B and C to describe this range of outbuildings.)

Barn A, also referred to as *Plot 3* (see *Plate 13*)

* A decayed and saturated fragment of planking which had been part of a fifth door in this series was found in the wood in the cellar, this has been removed to dry and to enable an accurate profile moulding to be obtained.

(NB. At the time of this survey Barn A had been stripped of its clay tiled roof and there were a series of enlarged openings at the rear.)

This later, three-bay range of brick building, has a hipped roof at its east end and was gabled at the west end. The building, which is not recorded on the 1806 Enclosure Award map, (see Fig.2), appeared to have been part of a Dairy unit and, despite having been extensively 'slighted' still retained some of the original tethering stalls. The roof was supported by an internal partition brick wall and two, deal, through-purlin, bolted king-post trusses with raked struts rising from adjacent to the foot of the king-post. The three ledged and braced, access doors from the farm yard all had segmental heads to them. Additional internal light was provided by two, eight paned, fixed light windows and a segmental headed, three pane window. This range of building had a mortar rendering.

Barn B also referred to as *Plot 4*, (see *Plates 14,15*).

This is the principal building of the yard complex and is a two storey, three bay, brick barn with clay tile roof, having three courses of stressed brickwork at the eaves. The end bays of the Barn are partially boarded over. Externally much of the brickwork of Barn B, particularly that on the east elevation was in a poor condition, (see *Plates 14,15*). Externally and more particularly internally, Barn B's walls bear testimony to changing practices in farming over the two hundred years of its existence, many of which required adjustments be made to the fabric of the buildings. The central bay of Barn B is separated from the other two bays by a pair of flank walls, (see *Plate 16*), and has single, opposed, ledged and braced, wagon entrance doors with arched heads. A square headed doorway with overlight gave access into the north, end bay of the Barn and a segmental headed doorway with ledged door gave access to the south, end bay.

At the south end of Barn B there are the remnants of an earlier, one and a half storey, two bay building which is now a mere shell. Part of this building serves as a covered accessway passing alongside the south gable of the barn the second bay contains several sections of mid-/late 18th century brickwork, (see *Plate 18*).

There is a single, diamond pattern, ventilator panel on the east elevation of the barn and the remains of two similar panels on the west elevation, all three panels serve the north, end bay of Barn B. Set at first floor level this brick extension spanned between the north gable of Barn B and the west end of Barn C, forming a partly covered footway alongside the north, gable wall of the Barn. This building was inaccessible as the area beneath was full of abandoned items and the floor of the unit itself appeared unstable. It appears to have been built to serve as a horse-grooms bothy but may have been used for the greater period of its existence as a hay store, (see *Plate 18*).

The roof Barn B is supported by a single, through purlin, deal, bolted, king-post truss with raked struts stepped from the swollen base of the king-post, (see *Plate 16*). The purlins, most of which appear to be hardwood, are also carried on a pair of tie-beams spanning the interval between the brick stub walls that defined the wagon entrance area of the barn. The south, gable wall of Barn B retained some earlier brickwork which included a series of four, segmental arched recesses that may originally have been open, (see *Plate 17*). The function of these four features remains unexplained. A suggestion that they may have been bee-boles seems unlikely as they are set close to the ground and would have been adjacent to one of the farm's major thoroughfares.

In the peak of the south gable of Barn B a series of eight, snapped, header bricks are set at the base of individual access holes of a pigeon loft. Internally at the peak of the gable there is a rare survival in the form of a wooden, boarded pigeon loft set on the topside of the purlins. This appears to be part of the original structure of the barn. An access door into this area is hung on strap hinges. At present there is no access to this feature which appears to be in comparatively original condition, (*see Plate 19*).

Barn C also referred to as *Plot 5* (*see Plate 20*).

(NB. At the time of this survey Barn C had been stripped of its clay tiled roof. The brickwork to some of the bays of building in this range were too hazardous to permit access)

The range of brick building identified as Barn C consists of two distinct units of stock accommodation set in line. The larger group of buildings contains four bays of building and a smaller, shorter run of two unequal bays of building lies to the west, (*see Plate 20*). The range seems to originally have been built as stabling and loose boxes for both the farm and house horses and the rear wall of the larger range of buildings had a series of brick mangers to it. A short bay at the east end of the larger unit of this range was probably a house horse stable. As observed in the notes of Barn B, (*see above*), there may have been a horse-grooms bothy at first floor of the west end of this range. The boarded doors of both units were ledged and hung on industrially produced strap hinges whose hooks were set into sandstone blocks built into the Barn walls. The doors and windows of the larger part of the range had segmental heads to them. The windows were six light, cast frames and had two rows of chamfered, blue bricks serving as soffits. The smaller unit, which had no windows to it, had three, plain framed door-heads with ledged, half-doors.

A single, tie-beam truss with half-lap apex joint and raked struts supported the roof of the larger, open area in the main range of this building. The roof purlins of the larger range were supported by transverse, brick partition walls, those of the smaller range were supported by transverse brick walls.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Farmhouse

Ground Floor

Proposal

Block the present access door leading from hallway, *G 2* to *G 4*.

Comment

The doorway has a pegged frame with a ledged and planked door with hand-wrought iron-work. In terms of diagnostic details the doors best face is that to the rear, i.e. *G 4*. In order to retain the greatest amount of information concerning the door it is recommended that the wall to seal this doorway should be on the hallway side.

Proposal

Form an access through gable wall of *G 7* into present small, mono-pitch roof building at the gable end to form a Study.

Comment

This work requires a doorway to be cut through the brickwork of the rear gable wall of the chimney-breast. There is limited headroom, 1.84m, maximum, (6ft) imposed by the fireplace bressumer which passes across the front of the chimney breast in supporting the chimney hood.

Any proposed works to remove or reduce the bressumer would be considered to pose an unacceptable threat to the historic fabric of the building.

Proposal

Remove door to staircase rising from *G 7* to *F9*.

Comment

This is a modern door and not part of the historic testimony of the house.

Proposal

Create new doorway through rear wall of *G 6*.

Comment

As well as cutting through the brickwork of the rear wall these proposed works require the removal of part of the thrawl in the Pantry area. This is not considered a significant loss as a substantial section of thrawl is to be retained.

First Floor

Proposal

This proposal relates to the closing of the access between *F2* and *F 4*, Ian Neale:Drawing 825-202 states "*existing opening bricked up, original door to remain in location.*"

Comment

No door or doorframe existed at this point at the time of this survey

Proposal

(1) It is proposed to divide *F 3* longitudinally to form a bathroom on the road facing side of the new partition and form a new access through the brick partition wall between *F2* and *F3*.

(2) Create a shower cabinet in the new bathroom area alongside the chimney breast by removing part of the brick wall that forms a wing, forming a hot press or airing cupboard alongside the chimney breast.

Comment

(1) Proposed partition runs clear of the spine beam running longitudinally through this area. The new access door will be cut through an area of brickwork which retains no features of significance.

Several of the glass panes in the window overlooking the street are old glass and of significance within the building. There is no indication how the need to create privacy screening for the bathroom is to be achieved.

(2) This was a non-intrusive survey, consequently it is not possible to be entirely certain but it is believed that the section of brickwork to be removed is an integral part of the brickwork of the chimney breast and served a specific function as identified above.

Proposal

(1) Remove modern partitioning between *F 5*, *F6* and *F7*

(2) Brick up doorway between *F4* and *F 5*

Comment

(1) The partitions to be removed are considered to be 20th century alterations and divisions of the area to form a first floor bathroom

(2) No loss of diagnostic informaiton.

Proposal

Remove partitioning creating landing *F 4* and chamber *F 8*.

Comment

No major impact noted.

Proposal

Create a new doorway giving access to *F 8* from area *F 7*

Close doorway at rear of cupboard adjacent to the chimney hood and presently forming a store area with access from both *F 7* and *F8*.

Comment

This new position for the doorway cuts through a structural wall but has no major impact on existing fabric.

Closing the rear access to the store area adjacent to the chimney hood re-introduces the original role of this area.

Proposal

Create *en suite* facility in 'void' area adjacent to the chimney hood and cut a doorway through the brick wing wall of the chimney breast, *see Plate 9*.

Comment

It is difficult to appreciate what *en suite* facilities can be fitted into the space available. Cutting through the wing wall of the fireplace is considered to prejudice relevant early building testimony. The creation of an *en suite* facility at this point also raises important questions concerning the locating of service runs and waste disposal which are not indicated on the plans. The present void is screened by a dwarf wall in *F 7*. The plans suggest this area is to be closed by some unspecified form of screen.

Proposal

Install new partition wall to form a landing at the head of the rear staircase in *F 9* and the existing chamber, also *F 9*.

Comment

Installation of such a feature is a reversible process and should not prejudice the historic integrity of the building.

Second FloorProposal

Create an *en suite* facility to bedroom S3 in part of the landing area S 2. Cut a new doorway through the wall separating F 3 from F 2.

Comment

The proposed location for the door seems to offer insufficient headroom for access to the *en suite* facility. Moving the door to a more convenient location in the partition wall raises other structural issues in terms of support for the roof from the existing purlins.

Outbuildings : Barns A, B, CBarn AProposal

It is intended to extend the east end of this range of building into the area where the south end of Barn B presently stands, this part of Barn B is to be demolished, and to form a wing to Barn B which will run southwards towards the existing pond.

Comment

This proposal involves removing the existing hip gable to Barn A and extending the building onto and over the line of the existing footprint of Barn B. This part of Barn B is built with early 18th century brick and appears to be the fragment of an earlier farm outbuilding that was subsequently incorporated into the present Barn B during the closing years of the 18th century. Any proposed works that include demolition of this unit will diminish the sequence of historic testimony contained within the range of buildings at Ravenstone Farm.

Observation

A series of large openings exist on the rear, i.e., pond elevation of this building but the drawings show slit windows on this elevation suggesting no loss of historic fabric is proposed.

Barn B

Reference has already been made in discussing Barn A to the proposal to demolish the two separate bays of building in the range of Barn B that appear to be part of an earlier, agricultural building.

Proposal

Proposed works on Barn B involve:

- (1) Removing all existing roof trusses and associated timbers and replacing with new purlins.
- (2) Removal of the cock-loft at the south gable
- (3) The proposed plans show no evidence of the four arched features in the south gable wall of Barn B being respected.

Comment

The proposed works appear to effectively remove Barn B's few surviving, diagnostic details, particularly the roof structure. While it is acknowledged that the brickwork of several areas of the barn as existing is severely decayed the extent to which the proposed works replace historic material with modern is extremely radical.

Externally a series of four diamond panels are shown set high on the main elevation of Barn B, it is believed these are an attempt to replicate the diamond pattern ventilator panel of the front elevation and two diamond pattern, ventilator panels of the rear elevation, none of which are shown as being present on the restored elevations of Barn B.

Collectively the proposed works on Barn B remove most, if not all of its historic indicators and substitute them with a homogenised form lacking historic integrity.

Barn C

Proposal

Demolish the existing first floor feature at east end of this range that is linked into the north gable of Barn B and form a new gable end feature.

Comment

This oversailing first floor chamber which forms a covered footway alongside the north gable wall of the barn is a unique feature of the site. Its demolition is regrettable and removes a significant feature from the courtyard group, particularly if this first floor chamber originally served as a horse-grooms bothy.

Proposal

It is proposed to refurbish the structural fabric of this range, including replacing the doors and converting some existing doorways into windows.

Comment

The proposed works respect the greater part of the existing fabric and layout of this range though the proposed designs of the doors and windows fail to draw references from the local vernacular tradition. Refurbishing for residential use will require the removal of all the brick mangers set alongside the rear, i.e. north wall of this range.

David Smith : Rob Hayward
TR Projects

June 2005

REFERENCES

- 1 Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland Record Office, QS 47/2/9
- 2 Nichols, J. 1804 *The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester* Vol.III, pt ii, pp936/7
- 3 LLRRO - Ravenstone Hospital Ref: DG/32/51 Accounts 1726-1759. All the documents referred to in this section of the text are contained in the Ravenstone Hospital collection held at LLRRO, the calendar for which is filed under Ref: DG 32.
- 4 DG 32/51, 1736 – 1759; DG 32/47, 1797 – 1853; DG 32/50 : 1893 – 1913
- 5 Alcock, NW & L. Hall 1994 *Fixtures and Fittings in Date Houses 1567-1763* Practical Handbook in Archaeology 11, Council for British Archaeology p.17, Sectn 17.
- 6 *ibid* 5, p.29, Sectn 29

APPENDIX ONE

KEY PLANS – Ravenstone Farmhouse and Outbuildings

The numbers shown on the house plans are those referred to in the text of the Report.
The Outbuildings are identified by letter form A, B and C.

No plans are given here of the farmhouse **Basement** or **Barn A**.

(acknowledgement: All plans are based on drawings received from Ian Neale Homes, Nuneaton.)

Fig. 4 Ravenstone Farm - Ground Floor plan

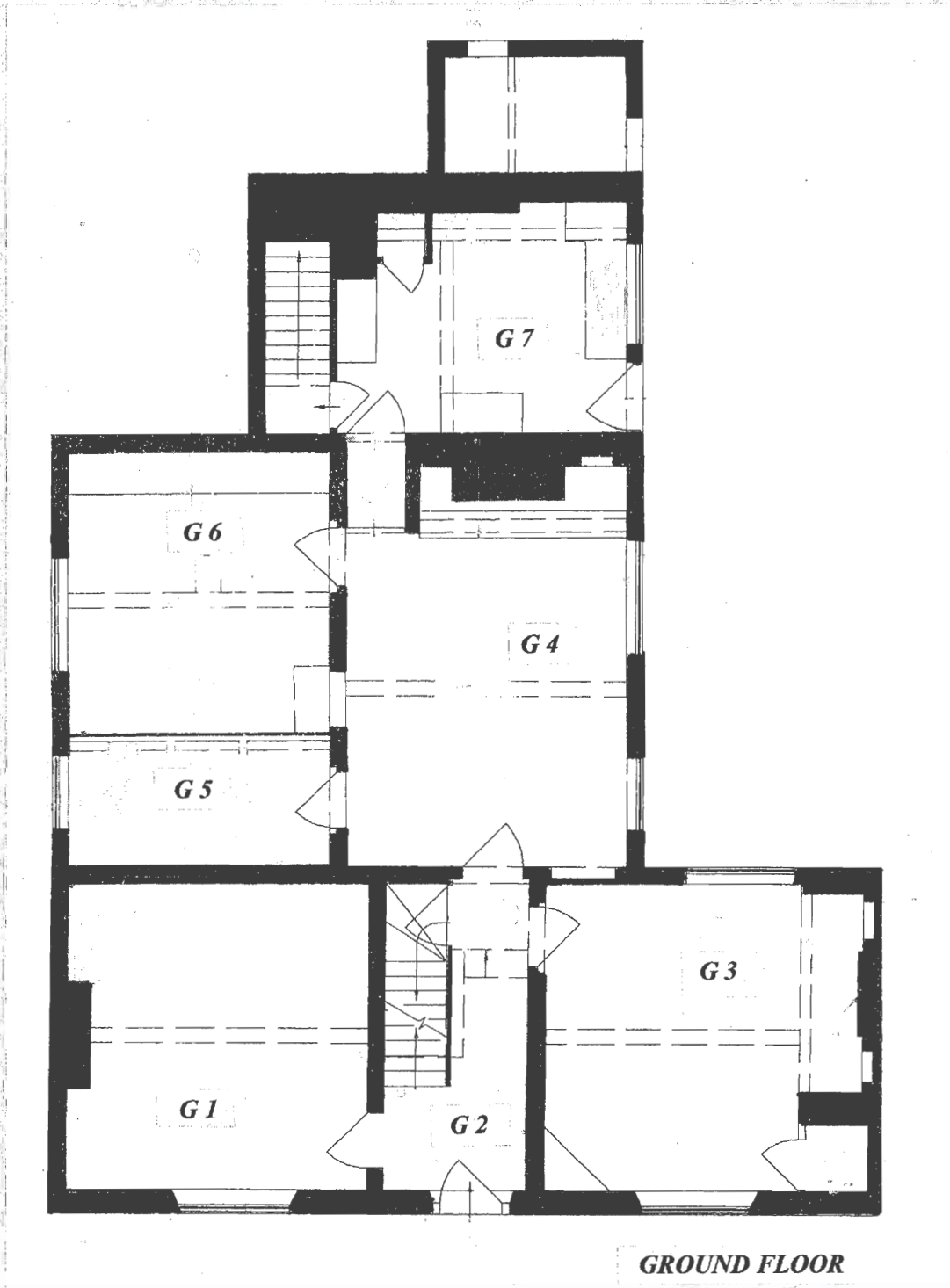


Fig.5 Ravenstone Farm - First Floor plan

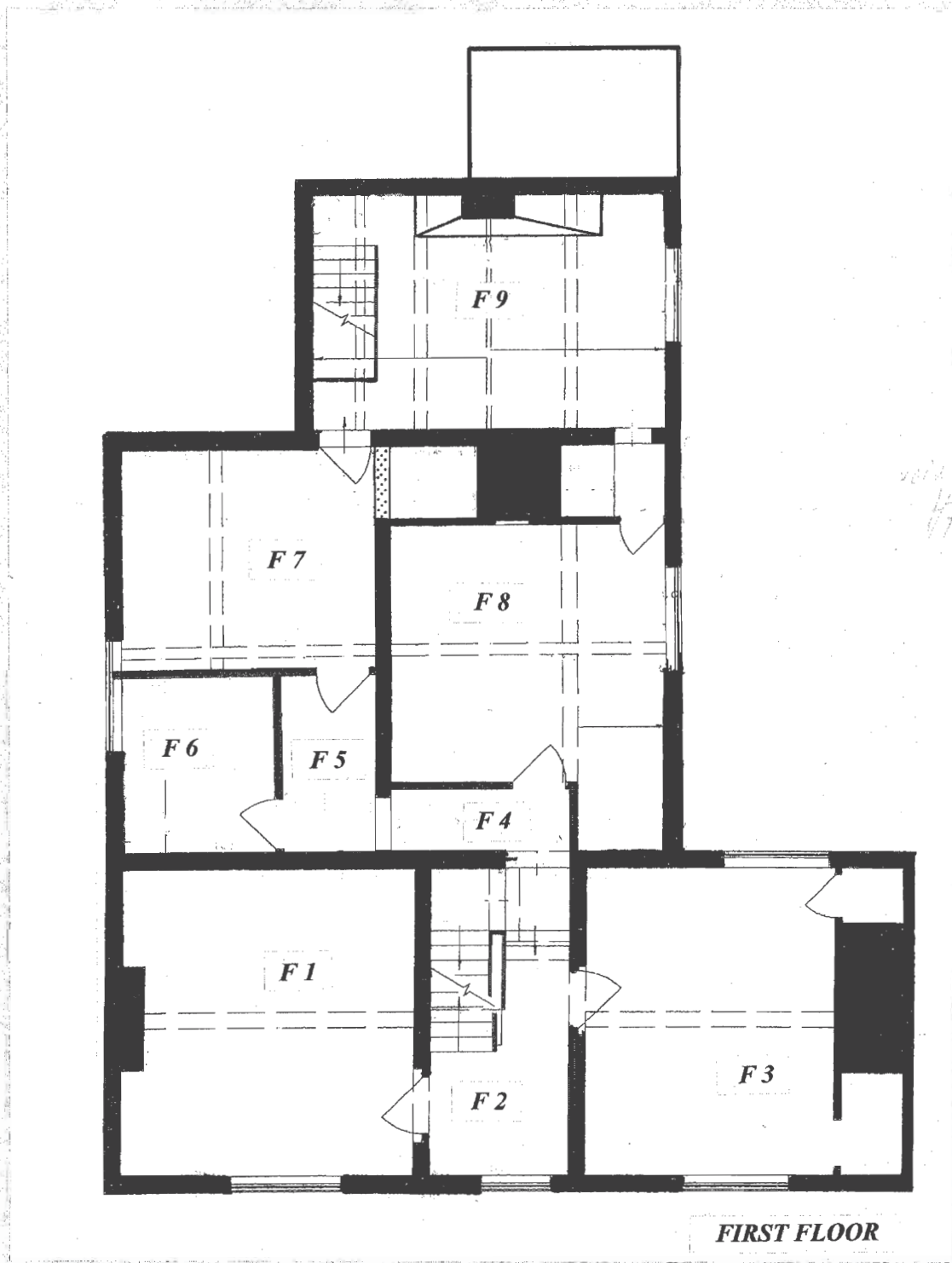
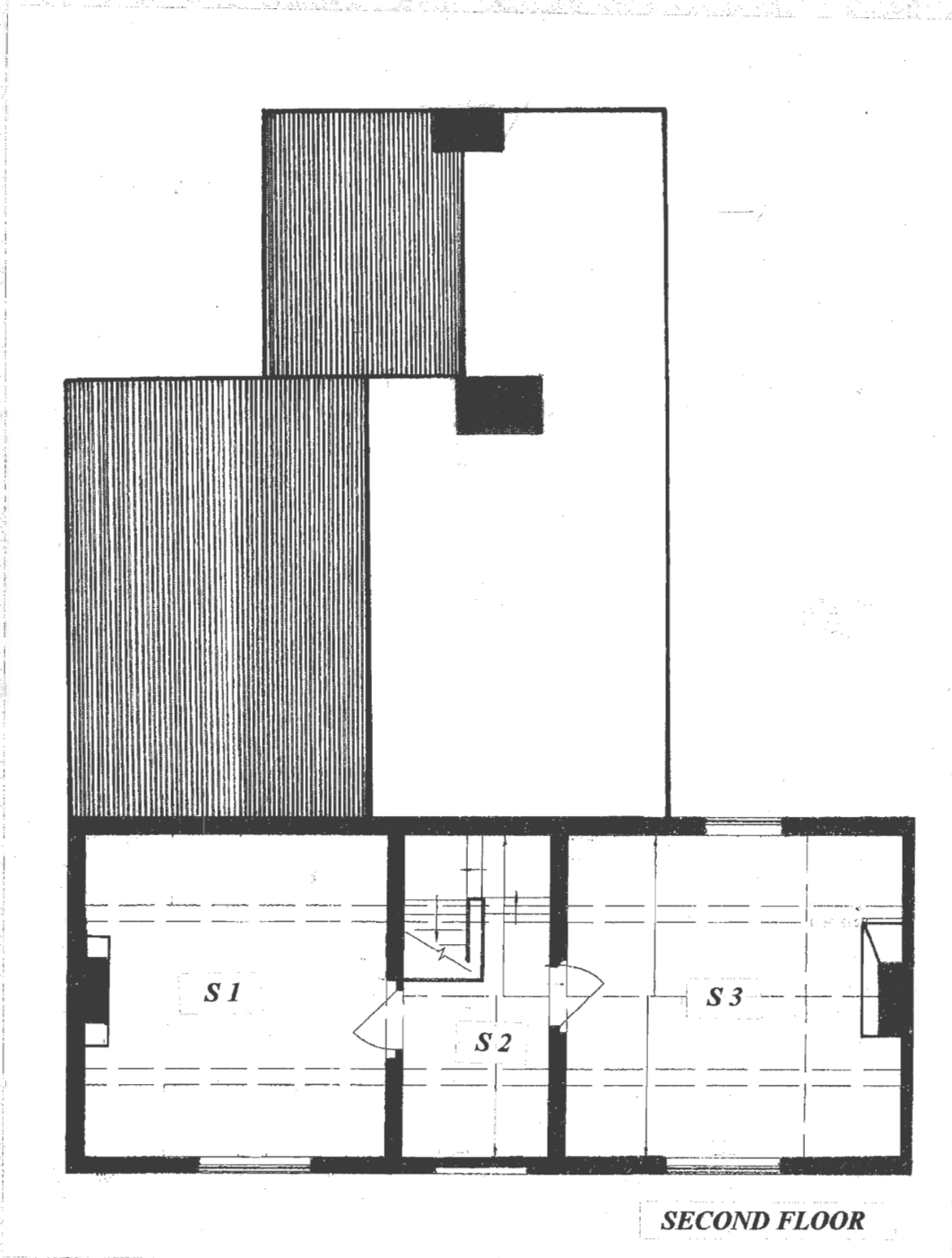
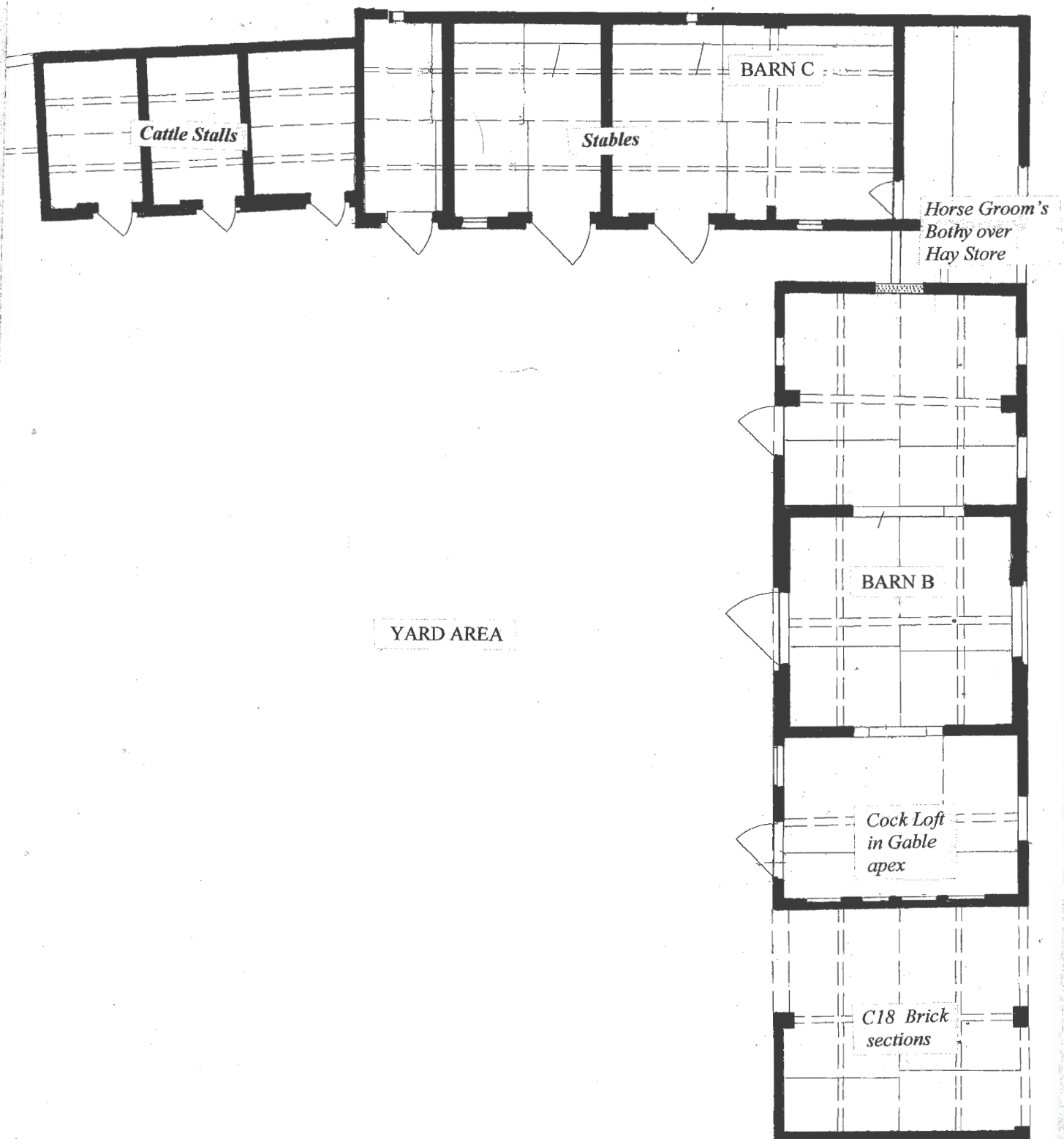


Fig.6 Ravenstone Farm - Second Floor plan



*Fig. 7 Ravenstone Farm - plans of
Barns B and C*



APPENDIX TWO

Plans and Drawings of Ravenstone Farm received from

Ian Neale Homes Ltd,
Tennant Street, Nuneaton

Drawing No.	Title
825-01	Survey Basement and GF Plans : The Farmhouse
825-02	Survey 1 st and 2 nd Floor Plans : The Farmhouse
825-03	Survey 1 st and 2 nd Floor Plans : The Farmhouse
825-04	Survey Plans and Elevations: Plot 3 Barn
825-05	Survey Floor Plan ; Plot 4 Barn
825-06	Survey Site Plan
825-201	Proposed Basement and GF Plans : Plots 1 & 2, The Farmhouse
825-202	Proposed 1 st and 2 nd Floor Plans : Plots 1 & 2, The Farmhouse
825-203 rev A	Proposed Elevations : Plots 1 & 2 : The Farmhouse
825-204 rev A	Plot 3 : Proposed Plans & Elevations
825-205 Rev A	Plot 4 : Proposed Plans & Elevations
825-206	Plot 5 : Proposed Elevations & Floor Plan
825-207	Garage & Guest Suite : Proposed Plans & Elevations
825-209 rev A	Plot 6 : Proposed Elevations
825-210 rev C	Proposed Site Plan

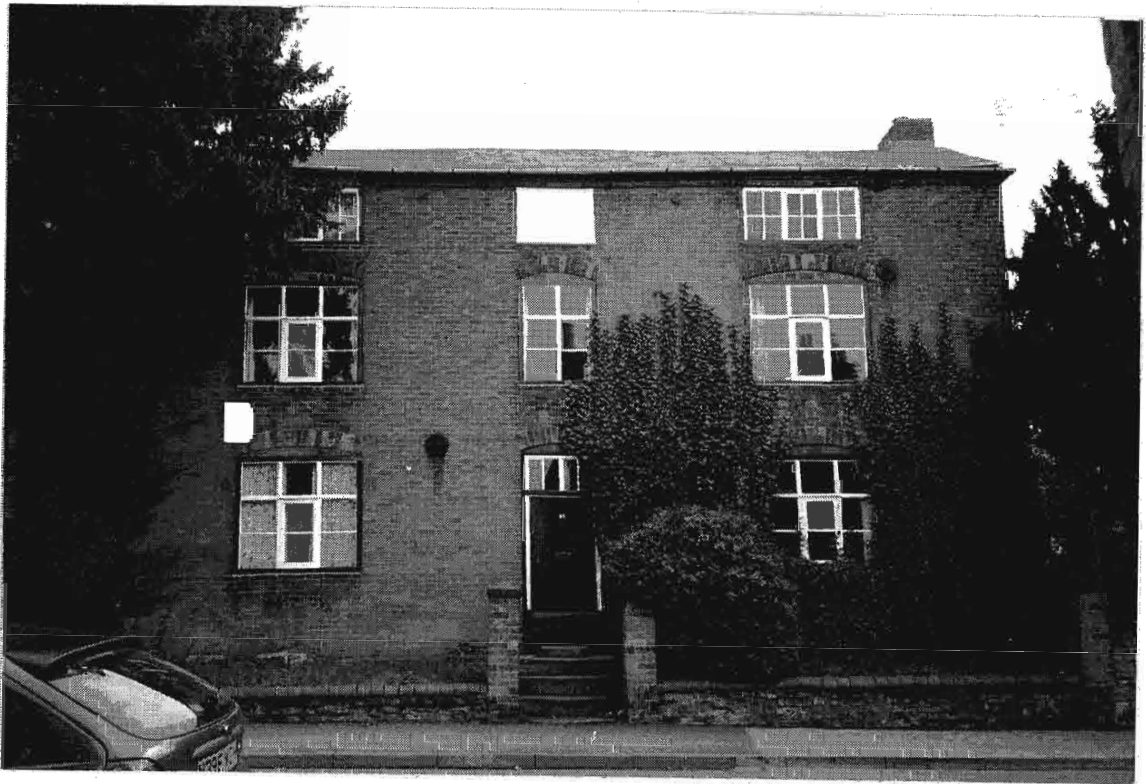


Plate 1 Ravenstone Farm, Higham-on-the-Hill, main elevation, showing series of blind, segmental arched windows at ground and first floor levels.

Plate 2 Ravenstone Farm, view of rear of house from the Yard area



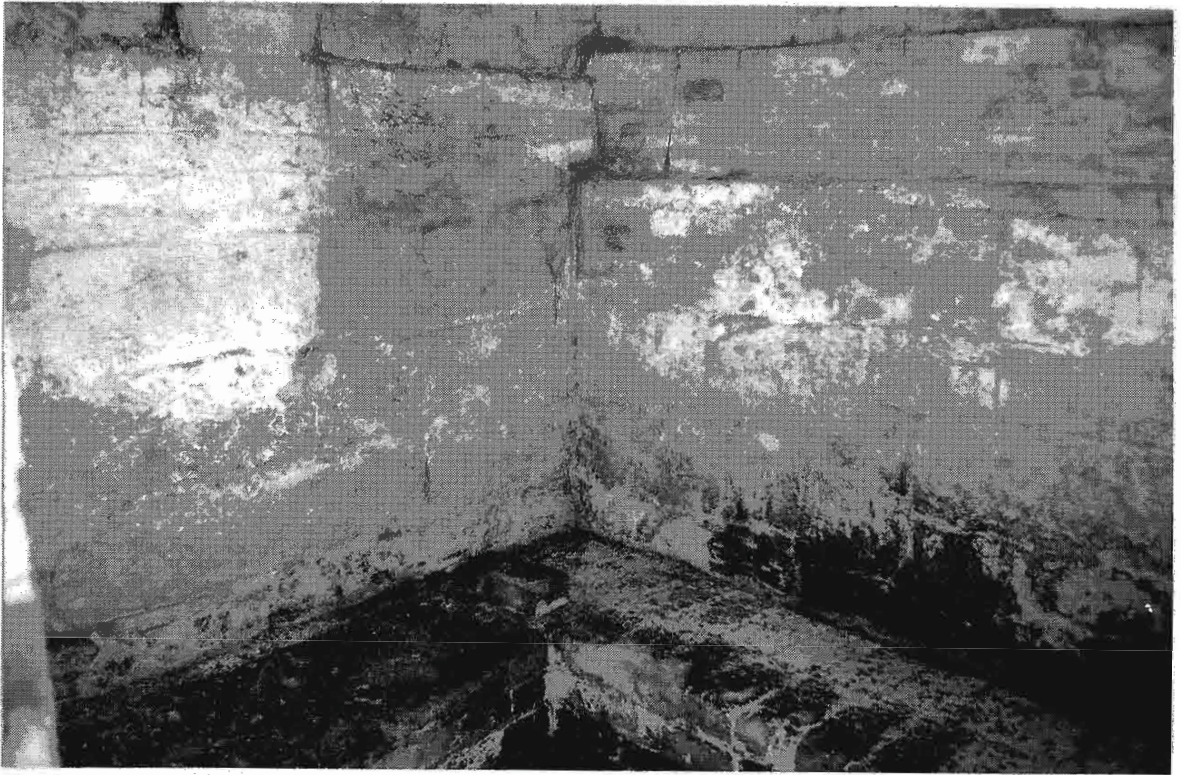


Plate 3 Detail of earlier sandstone cellar walls with 18th century brick of present farmhouse rising from them. C18 brick thrawl in foreground.

Plate 4 Detail showing joists to floor of room G 1 in cellar with vee-grooves, mortises and stale holes, being re-used sections from a timber-framed building.



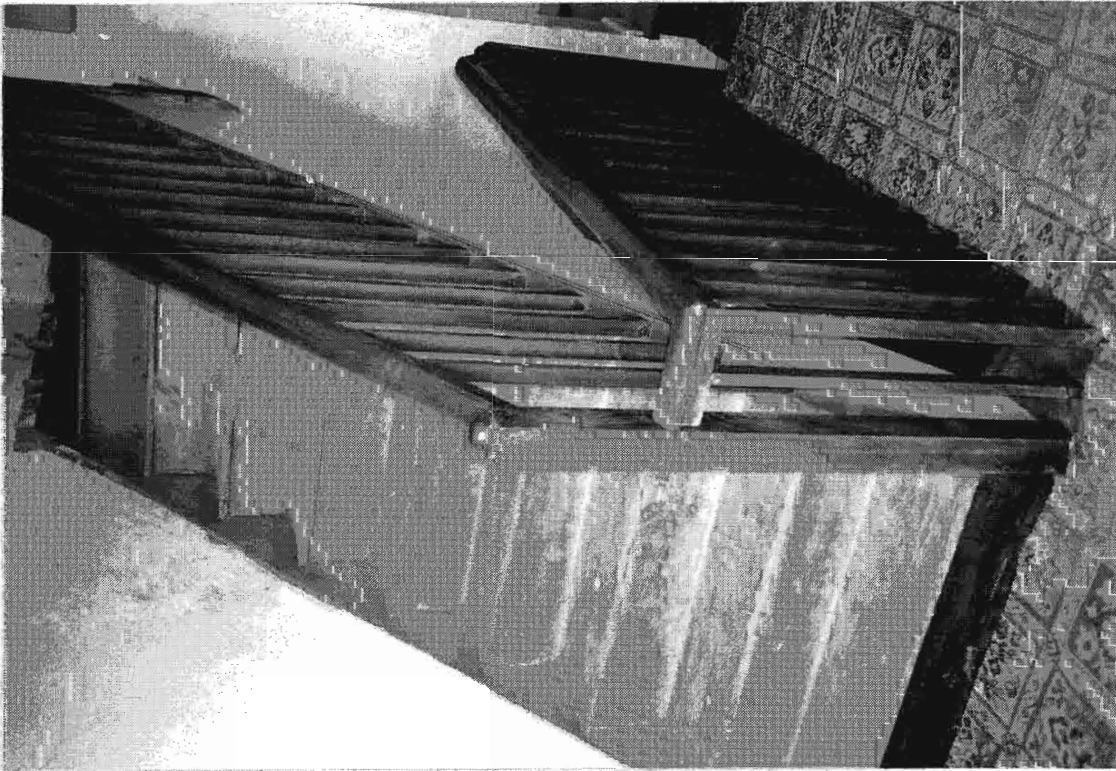


Plate 5 Detail of the main staircase in the farmhouse, at first floor level, showing the square newel with bun cap, stick balusters, plain oval, handrail and standard treads and risers, all of deal.

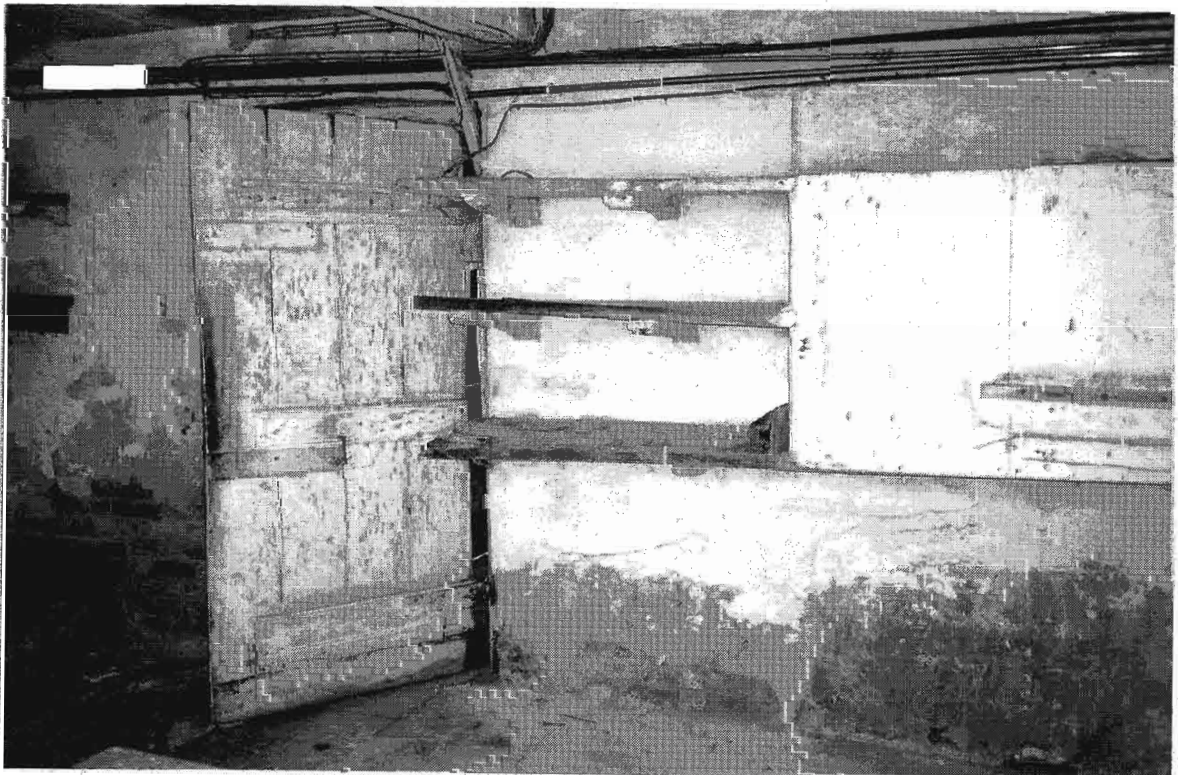


Plate 6 Fireplace in G 4, showing the straight fireplace bressummer and modern brick fireplace inserted into hooded area. On the right the sole surviving detail of the earlier fireplace arrangement survives in the form of a dry cupboard with drawer underneath



Plate 7 Interior detail of room G 4, looking towards fireplace and rear of building. Showing the plank and ledged door leading into G 6, Pantry, panelled doors of the wall cupboard, access to G 7 and part of chimney hood bressummer.

Plate 8 Partition wall between G 6, Pantry, and G 4, showing rear of wall cupboard, elm boarded shelves supported on wooden horn brackets and inner face of the plank and ledged door whose face is shown in Plate 7.



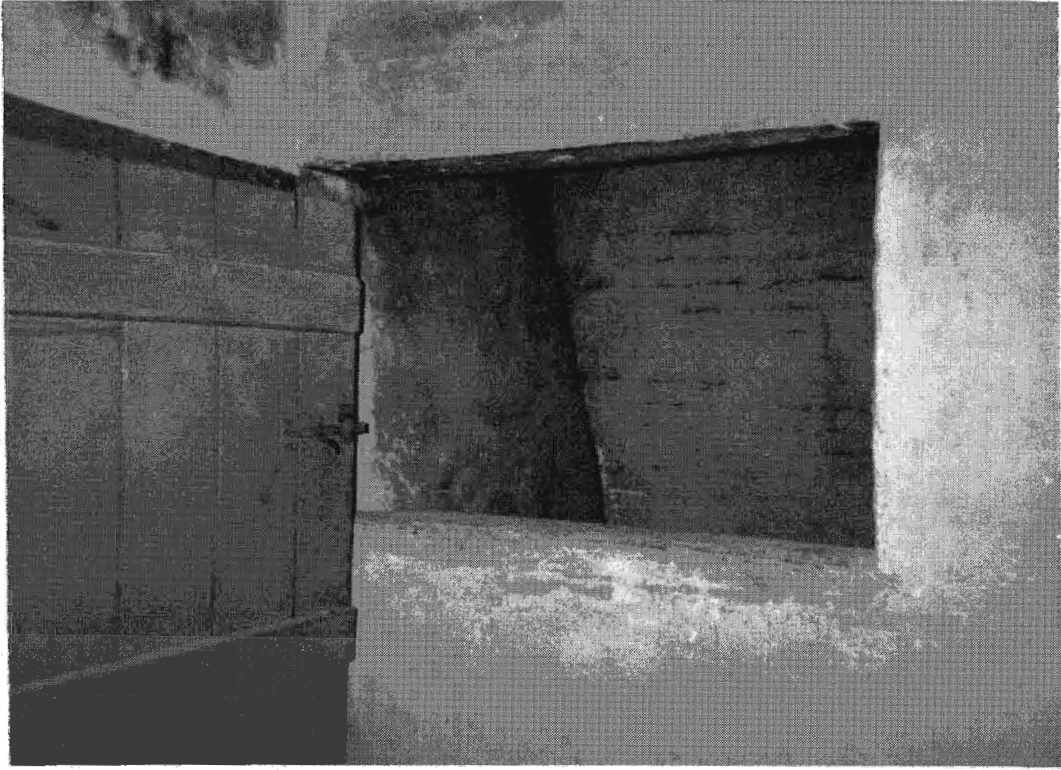


Plate 9 Detail of the 'void' area adjacent to the chimney flue, viewed from F 7. The 'void' area is to be made into an 'en suite' facility.

Plate 10 Detail of chimney hood at F 9 with stairs rising from G 7 to left and a section of the wide, hardwood, planked floor in foreground.



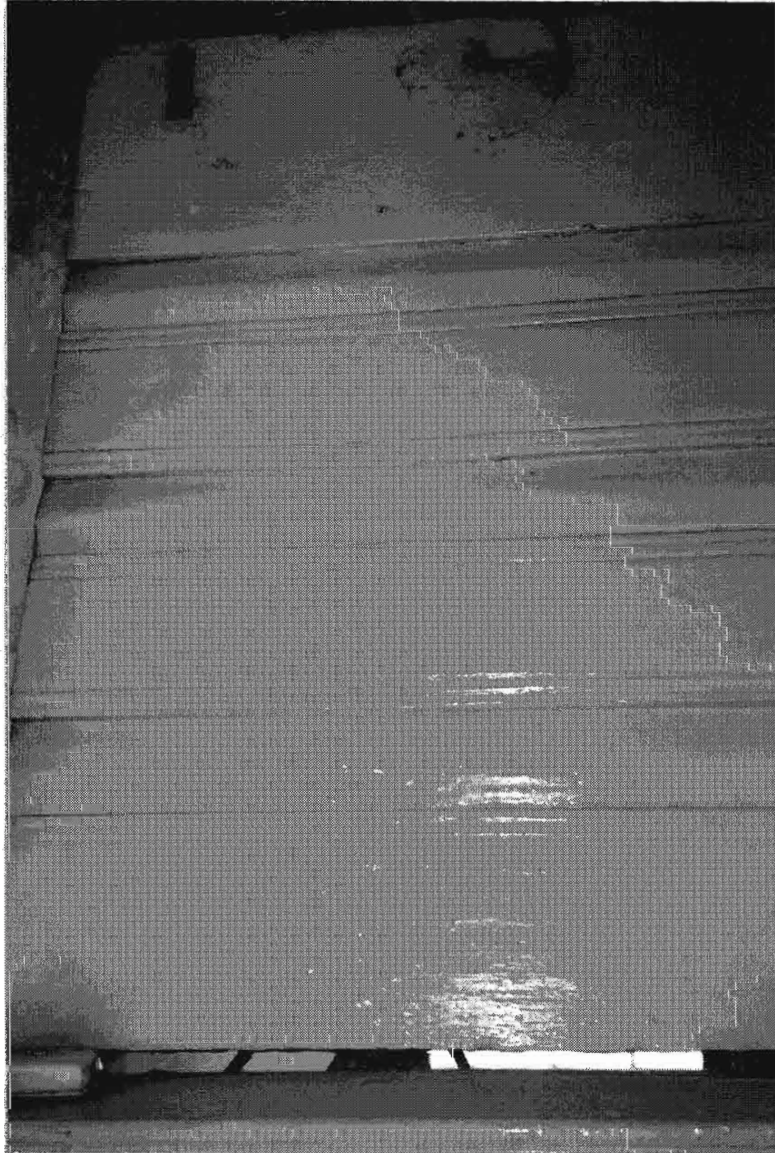


Plate 11 Detail of door face at G 4, showing both the moulded plank edges and cambered insert sections with plain, plank lock stile.

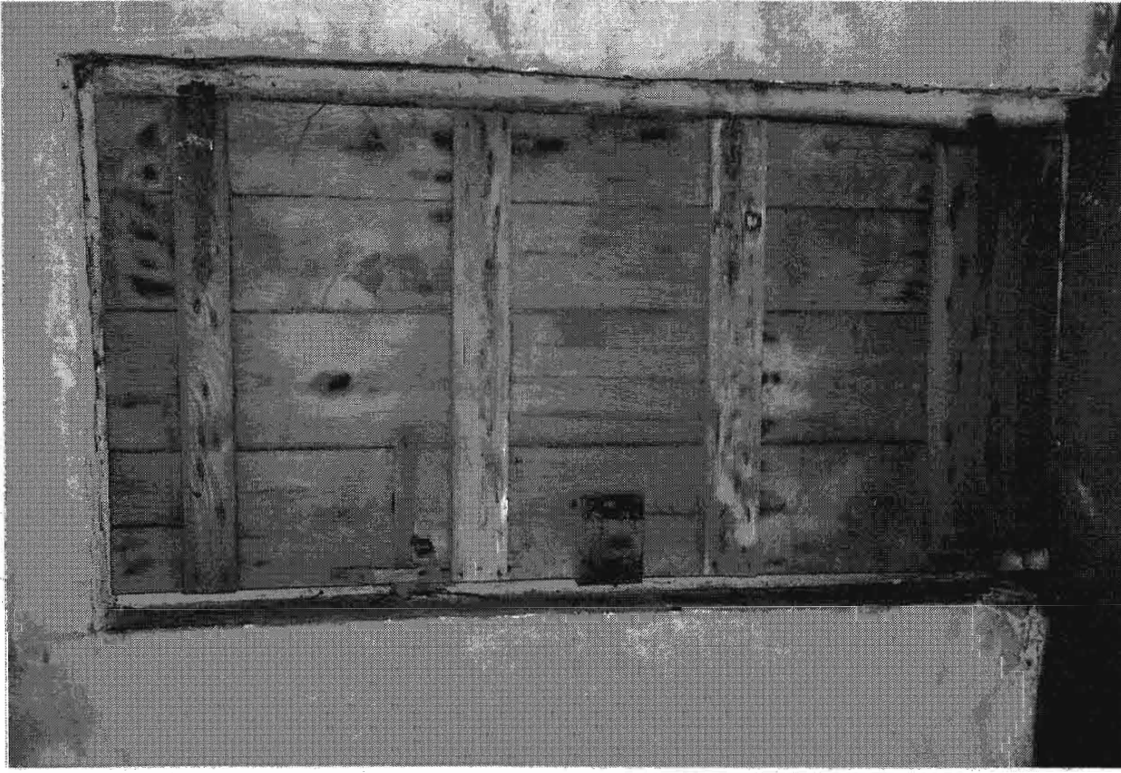


Plate 12 Rear of door at S3 showing the ledges, wooden latch, later 19th century lock, plain form of the rear of the moulded planks, sirap hinges and evidence of re-hanging of door in the key-holes by the hinge edge.



Plate 13 General view of part of Barn A, showing hipped gable at its west end and conventional type of windows and doors present.

Plate 14 Rear, i.e., west elevation of Barn B with single, wagon entrance door and showing the severely weathered condition of much of the brickwork





Plate 15 Front elevation detail of Barn B, showing the single, wagon entrance door with arched head. Detail of the eaves brickwork is visible where the roof tiles have slipped.



Plate 16 Interior detail of Barn B showing the brick flank walls at the wagon entrance bay and single, king-post roof truss.

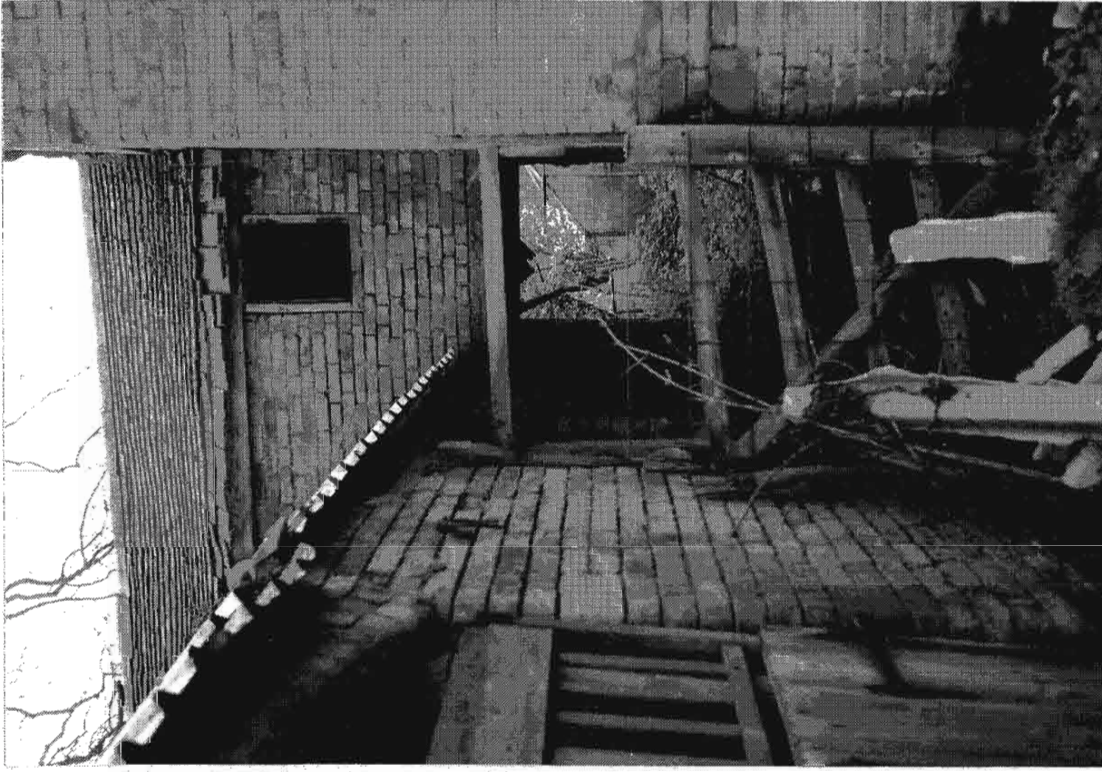


Plate 18 Covered walkway between Barn B (right) and Barn C (left) formed by oversailing brick unit, here described as a horse-groom's bothy that was subsequently used as a hay store.



Plate 17 Detail of the series of late, C18 brick arches with C19 blocking set into the south, gable wall of Barn B.



Plate 19 View of the late, C18 pigeon loft, supported by the topside of the purlins and set in the apex of the south gable of Barn B.

Plate 20 General view of Barn C, showing the two different dimensions of stables and loose boxes to right and stalling for cattle to left.

