The Old House, 16 Station Road, Littlethorpe, Leicestershire: Historic Building Impact Assessment

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1. Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services has been commissioned by DCI Architecture Ltd on behalf of J & N Builders Ltd to produce an Historic Building Impact Assessment for the Old House, 16 Station Road, Littlethorpe, Leicestershire (NGR: SP 541 970). The Impact Assessment has been requested by the Blaby District Conservation Officer, in respect of proposals to update the accommodation that will involve alterations and repairs to the building requiring planning and listed building consent. Assessment follows the guidelines set out in the English Heritage document *Informed Conservation: Understanding historic buildings and their landscapes for conservation* (Clark 2001).

The purpose of assessment is to determine what impacts, if any, the proposed changes may have on the special interest of this grade II listed building and its landscape. This information will assist in identifying ways in which negative impacts may be avoided or mitigated, in addition to promoting beneficial impacts. An understanding of the form, function, age and development sequence of the building is required in order to define its significance, facilitating an informed assessment of the potential impact of the proposed changes.

The assessment has been made following an examination of the building, comparison of existing and proposed survey drawings, and discussion with the architect and Conservation Officer. For ease of reference a nominal system of room numbers has been applied, prefixed with a 'G' for rooms on the ground floor and 'F' for first floor (Figures 1 & 2).

The assessment process has included some limited intrusive investigation designed to clarify the character and date of built fabric in areas where this was not otherwise apparent and therefore an accurate assessment of the impact of proposed changes in those areas was not possible. The areas investigated in this manner were agreed in advance with the Conservation Officer and limited in scope to the minimum intervention necessary to provide the required information.

2. General Description and Outline Chronology

The Old House, 16 Station Road, Littlethorpe, is a grade II listed former farmhouse; the listing description is reproduced as an appendix to this report. It served this function until recently and the farmyard to the rear (east) of the building has been redeveloped for housing in the last few years. There are four main structural elements to the Old House, outlined below and described in more detail in section 4:

A. At the south end of the building, a two-storey jettied cross-wing, gable end on to the street, of timber-framed construction with thatched roof. The corner posts of the projecting upper storey extend down to ground level to support the jetty. Pevsner suggests a late 15th century date for the construction of this range (1992, 276).

B. On the north side of **A**, the range running parallel with Station Road and set back slightly from the street frontage. This is a two-storey timber-framed structure with thatched roof that probably dates to the second half of the 16th century (Pevsner 1992, 276; Webster 1985; Milward 1985, 72).

C. To the east (rear) of the cross-wing **A**, is a two-storey brick-built range with slated roof. Webster suggests that this is late 18th century (Webster 1985) although a date in the early 19th century seems equally possible; it was certainly in existence by 1888.

D. To the east (rear) of **B**, at its north end, is a small, single-storey brick-built outhouse with flat roof. This probably dates to the second half of the 19th century and was certainly in existence by 1888; it has subsequently been altered.

A range of single-storey agricultural buildings situated within the garden area to the east (rear) of the house is not considered in detail as part of this report; these are all probably 19th century in date.

Currently the farmhouse is separated into two self contained dwellings, although it was almost certainly built as a single house. Historical map evidence shows that it had been separated into two units by the late 19th century (Figure 3).

Photo 1. The Old House 16 Station Road, Littlethorpe. 15th century cross-wing **A** in foreground with 16th century range **B** to left.

Photo 2. Rear of the building with brick-built range **C** on left, timber-framed range **B** with rectangular panelling and attached to this on the right the single-storey brick-built outhouse **D**.

3. Historical Sources

The general historical and archaeological background to the site was presented in a desk-based assessment produced for the previous owner in 2004 (ULAS report 2004-151). For the purposes of this assessment, certain documentary and cartographic evidence is relevant in terms of understanding the development sequence of the house.

Two probate inventories, for Thomas Bent (died 1565) and his son John Bent (died 1585), include reference to a property in Littlethorpe which is generally accepted as being the Old House. Inventories of this type list an individual's possessions at death and are validated in a church court. The inventory made on the death of Thomas Bent refers to a 'toft' in Littlethorpe and twenty years later, on the death of John Bent, the same toft 'on which a mansion house is built' is recorded. The assumption has been made that the extant house was constructed by John Bent in the two decades between 1565 and 1585 (Webster 1985). If this interpretation is correct then presumably it is the timber-framed range lying parallel with the street (range **A**) that was built by John Bent. The overall form and constructional details of this range are broadly consistent with such a date. The cross wing to the south (range **B**) is certainly earlier however (see below), indicating that there was already a house on the site prior to this date.

Pevsner gives a brief description of the house in the second edition of *The Buildings of England: Leicestershire and Rutland* (1992, 276):

> The Old House, Station Road. The timber-framed, jettied cross-bay carried on corner posts is a rare survival of a late C15 house. The main range, running parallel to the street is a mid-C16 build, with close studding surviving above the middle rail and peg-hole evidence for its existence below the rail. At the rear only basic rectangular panelling was ever used. A heated parlour in this range shows the development of domestic arrangements by the mid C16.

Other published references, by Roy Milward (1985) and V.R. Webster (1985, 72), relate the building to the probate inventory evidence (see bibliography).

The earliest readily available map that illustrates the property in detail is the Ordnance Survey first edition 1:2500 map sheet XXXVI.16 published in 1888. The outline of the building at that date is essentially similar to its appearance now, with the only significant alteration in the intervening period being the addition of the porch located on the rear (east) side at the junction of the two timber-framed ranges; this is not present on the 1888 map but is shown on the 1917 OS edition. Subsequent Ordnance Survey maps show no further changes to the house. The 1888 OS map also serves to confirm that the building had already been subdivided to form two separate dwellings by that date.

4. Description and Interpretation

4.1 Cross-wing (range A)

The earliest element of 16 Station Road, Littlethorpe is the jettied cross-wing at the south end (range **A**). This is a thatched, two-storey, two-bay, timber-framed structure raised on a rubble stone plinth (Photo 1). The framing of the south elevation is reasonably complete with close studding at first floor level and heavy, curved downward (tension) braces. The infill panels consist of daub on split laths wedged into stave grooves in the sides of the studs. On the ground floor fewer framing members survive, however peg-hole evidence indicates that the studs were more widely spaced than those of the first floor. The jettied, street-facing elevation has square-framed panels on the ground floor with upward braces. The two corner posts have moulded brackets cut from the solid, each of slightly different design. The original infill has been replaced with brick. The upper wall framing and that of the gable has largely been replaced with brick and the original arrangement of timbers is unclear. Above the collar of the gable frame there is close studding. An unusual (though not unknown) aspect of the cross-wing construction is the way in which the first floor corner posts are continued down to ground level to support the overhang. It has been suggested in the past that these are inserted timbers (eg. Listing description), added at a later date presumably to counter some supposed structural failure in the jetty. However these posts are jointed in to all adjacent timbers in a manner that suggests they are an original constructional detail. Furthermore, a much simpler and far more common means of supporting a jetty is to construct new ground storey walls on the line of the overhang, which also serves to increase the size of the ground floor room. In all probability the posts are part of the original build.

The cross-wing roof structure consists of principal rafter trusses with raking struts framed between tiebeam and collar; all of the timbers are of heavy scantling suggestive of an early date (Photo 3). Purlins are clasped between collar and principal rafters; it is unclear whether the purlins are reduced above collar level, a characteristic of 15th century roofs of this type. The apex arrangement is unusual with the ridge purlin also clasped, between the principal rafters and a short sub-collar. This sub-collar has bare-faced dovetail joints to the principal rafters and a V-shaped upper edge supporting a diamond-set ridge purlin (Photo 4). The RCHME survey of architectural monuments in north Northamptonshire recorded a similar arrangement of ridge purlins supported on short collars in about half of the clasped purlin roofs in that region, typically dated to the 15th century (RCHME 1984, xlv-xlvi).

Photo 3. South cross-wing (range **A**), central roof truss.

Photo 4. South cross-wing (range **A**), central roof truss: apex detail.

Internally the present staircase, although later, appears to occupy a similar position to the original stair. A corner stack serving fireplaces in the ground and first floor front rooms is likely to be an addition of the 18th century. There is no evidence for earlier heating arrangements in this wing. The first floor structure is of solid gypsum or lime-based construction laid on reed.

Details such as the downward braces, heavy timbers and closely spaced floor joists laid flat, in addition to the form of the roof structure, are suggestive of a date in the 15th century for the construction of this range.

4.2 Hall range (range B)

Range **B**, parallel with Station Road, is a thatched, two-storey, three-bay timber-framed structure raised on a stone plinth. The street-facing elevation has close studding at first floor level, with peg-hole evidence for a similar arrangement on the ground floor, although most of the studs have been removed at this level. The rear elevation has basic rectangular panelling with slightly curved upward braces (Photo 2). Much of the framing in the north gable wall has been replaced and most of the infill to all external walls is now brick. Roof trusses have curved principals halved at the apex and linked by a tiebeam and collar. Framed between tiebeam and collar are raking struts. There are curved windbraces rising from the principals to the underside of the purlins. A diamond-set ridge is carried in the forked apex of the crossed principals.

The southernmost bay of this range is rather long and there are indications, including a sequence of carpenter's assembly marks, for the former existence of an intermediate truss across the centre of room F5. A collar at this point, at first floor ceiling level, carries a reused timber that supports the ridge (Photo 5). This reused timber is either the head or sill of a mullioned window with housings for four diamond mullions and intermediate glazing or security bars, indicating a window of at least 5 lights. Another timber with housings for similar mullions is reused as a first floor joist in the narrow section linking the two timber framed elements of the building; the implications of this is evidence are considered in section 4.5 below.

Photo 5. Hall range **B**, timber from mullioned window reused in roof space.

The massive chimneystack in this range serves back to back fireplaces on the ground floor in what were presumably a hall (or living-kitchen) and a parlour, with an unheated room in the northern bay. There were no first floor fireplaces though the stack would have provided some radiant heat. The ground floor room G6 is now furnished with a Pantheon pattern hob grate of late 18th or early 19th century type and timber surround, either side of which are fitted cupboards with panelled doors. Timber bracketed shelves running round the room are probably later 19th century.

The annexing of the northern end of this range to form a separate dwelling is likely to be a relatively late alteration, probably occurring in the 18th or 19th century. It is clear that a number of the windows in this range correspond with original window positions, although often the present window openings

have been widened. Window frames generally are a mixture of timber and metal casements, all apparently attributable to the early decades of the 20th century, though not necessarily all of one date. The first floor structure is of gypsum or lime ash type, except for the annex at the north where this has been replaced with modern boards. In the northern bay the first floor structure is entirely of 20th century construction, supported on a steel I-beam.

The form and constructional details of this range are consistent with a date in the second half of the 16th century, in line with the suggested rebuilding by John Bent.

Photo 6. Fireplace and fitted cupboards in room G6.

4.3 Brick-built addition to east of cross-wing (range C)

The brick-built and slate-roofed range **C** is broadly attributable to between the late 18th and mid 19th century. It has been altered on the ground floor but there is a surviving fire surround on the first floor which is comparable with early 19th century examples elsewhere (Photo 7). Skirting boards also remain in this room. Window openings in the rear elevation have segmental arch heads; frames are 20th century replacements.

Photo 7. Early 19th century fire surround in room F4 (range **C**).

4.4 Brick-built outhouse (range D)

Range **D** is a brick-built outhouse or coal store of the late 19th century, constructed against the east wall of range **B**; it is illustrated on the first edition OS map of 1888. It has rounded brick detailing to door reveals and decorative ceramic ventilators with a geometric design. There are areas of later brickwork and the present flat roof arrangement is possibly not original.

4.5 The evidence for an early hall

Cross-wings of the type represented by range **A** are invariably associated with an attached hall range, either being constructed at the same time, or else added to an earlier hall. Since the adjacent range **B** is significantly later in date than the cross-wing, it is reasonable to conclude that this was built to replace an earlier hall range, which is likely to have occupied the same site. Open halls of medieval type were often not easily adapted to provide storeyed accommodation, which became the norm from the later 16th century onwards, and were replaced rather than remodelled. This seems the most likely scenario at the Old House. It is possible that various timbers reused in the construction of the 16th century range **B** may derive from this demolished earlier hall, potentially providing evidence of its form and date.

As mentioned above, two reused timbers noted within the building derive from mullioned windows, one of which is from a window of at least 5 lights. It is difficult to equate a window of this size with either phase of the extant timber-framed structure. There is perhaps room for a window of these proportions at first floor level on the front elevation of the southern cross-wing; it may be possible to confirm or disprove this with a close inspection of the remaining framing members. Alternatively these timbers may derive from the suggested early hall, which the 16th century range **B** replaced; large mullioned windows were common in medieval timber halls, particularly windows lighting the high end of the hall.

5. Impact Assessment

Changes proposed as part of the development are identified room by room and their potential impact assessed. Additional general comments or notes on areas where further clarification of the development proposals may be desirable are included. The results of the intrusive investigation stage are also incorporated into this section. Room names are those shown on the proposed survey drawings.

The initial Impact Assessment was based on proposed development plans supplied by the architect. Revised submission proposals (drawing nos. 477.JN-46) include some variations to the earlier scheme. These are covered in the relevant section under a **Supplement** heading.

5.1 Ground Floor

G1 Family room

- No changes proposed. Query proposals for heating and flooring within this room.

G2 Cloaks and **G3** Utility

- Formation of new wall and door in G2 creating cloakroom: no significant impact.
- Provision of plumbing to the cloakroom and utility should be sensitive to early built fabric; waste in particular will presumably be routed through the stone plinth of the south wall of the 15th century range (Photo 8), this should be designed to minimise the impact.
- Note that the plank and batten door to G3 is early and should ideally be retained *in situ* or reused elsewhere (Photo 9).

Photo 8. G2 proposed cloakroom.

Photo 9. G3 plank and batten door.

G4 Kitchen

- No significant changes proposed. The floor has been broken out and all fittings removed.
- **Supplement**. Remove window in north wall and extend opening down to floor, install painted timber French doors: limited impact. The window proposed for removal is of 20th century date and its design is not particularly sympathetic to this element of the building. The removal of brickwork below the existing opening will not have any significant detrimental effect. See also general comment on replacement of windows in section **5.3** below.

G5 Hallway

- New doorway: no significant impact
- New flooring to replace existing concrete slabs (also G2 & G3). Any ground reduction to provide formation for new flooring has the potential to impact upon any buried archaeological remains which may survive (eg. earlier floor levels).

G6 Dining room

- The south wall of the dining room, initially earmarked for removal, will be retained. Fireplace, fitted cupboards and high-level shelving in this room should all be retained (Photo 6). Query proposals for heating.

G7 & G8 Passage

- In order to provide a ground floor link between the two halves of the building it is proposed to remove the existing washroom facilities and form an opening in the wall between G7 and G8. The nature of the wall fabric at this point was uncertain and an opening was made to assess its significance in order to clarify the potential impact (Photo 10). The wall is composed of 20th century brickwork bonded with cement mortar and coated in gypsum plaster. Creation of an opening at this point will not affect any early built fabric and will have the beneficial impact of reuniting the two halves of the building.
- The 19th century 4-panel door into G7 and its surround (Photo 11) are of some quality and match other doors in this part of the house; consideration should be given to retention *in situ* or reuse elsewhere within the building (eg as the proposed new doorway in G5, see above).

Photo 10. Wall between G7 and G8 proposed for removal.

Photo 11. 19th century door & surround to G7.

G9 Study

- Query proposals for the fireplace. The present arrangement is modern and possibly not to the taste of many potential purchasers; if changes are proposed these should be sensitive to the early fabric of the stack.

G10 Hallway

- Creation of new doorway between G10 cupboard and G11 – see below.

G11 Living room

- Creation of new doorway between G10 cupboard and G11. The wall fabric at this point is 16th century timber-framing with infill consisting of 20th century machine-made brick. The doorway would be formed adjacent to an *in situ* stud and below a girding beam at first floor level. The stud has peg-hole evidence for a rail which, if *in situ* would run across the proposed opening. Intrusive investigation at this point served to clarify that this rail has been removed at some time in the past and that there is no earlier fabric trapped within the brickwork of the wall (Photos 12 & 13). Care should be exercised when removing the infill to avoid damage to the 16th century timberwork. The adjacent stud is not vertical and some packing will be required between this and the door frame, again care should be exercised to avoid damage.
- It is proposed to reduce in size the brick pier carrying the steel I-beam which supports the modern first floor structure above room G11, in order to form an opening wide enough for the doorway (Photo 14). The pier is later in date than the brick infill to the adjacent wall and is not tied in to the wall fabric. Subject to verification by the structural engineer, it should be possible to halve the width of the pier without affecting the I-beam or the first floor structure, providing the width necessary to form the doorway. The creation of a doorway at this point is not considered to represent a significant adverse impact and will facilitate the use of this room as a living space, which is more appropriate in the context of the building as a family home (as opposed to its former use as an agricultural store).
- (See **Supplement** below) Blocking of glass brick window in west (front) wall and creation of two new window openings in north gable wall. The timber-framed north wall has been rebuilt in brick with only the corner posts remaining below tiebeam level. The arrangement of the proposed new windows has been designed to balance the existing pair of first floor windows. The impact on the built fabric is not considered to be significant. Removal of the existing glass brick window in the front elevation (not shown on the existing survey drawings) will result in a blank section of the façade. There may be some aesthetic merit in retaining a window in this elevation, utilising the existing opening but with a more appropriate frame. It seems likely that there was originally a window in this wall and there may be residual evidence of this in the timber fame. If it can be demonstrated that the glass brick window corresponds with the position of an earlier opening this would strengthen the argument for retention of a window in this wall.
- **Supplement**: The revised scheme proposes a single ground floor opening in the north wall accommodating a pair of French doors. The impact on built fabric is not considered to be significant. The visual effect of the paired windows initially proposed, balancing those on the first floor, was more appealing than a single, off-centre opening. The existing glass brick window in the front elevation will be replaced with a new painted timber window in the existing opening, see comment above.
- Query proposals for present concrete floor. The potential for the existence of an earlier medieval hall on this site is set out above, evidence of which may survive below ground level and may be affected by any proposed re-flooring.

Photo 12. G10 cupboard, proposed new doorway: 20th century brick infill and 16th century stud. Note pegs securing rails (now missing) just above level of shelf.

Photo 13. G11 proposed new doorway: intrusive investigation confirming that rail is no longer *in situ*.

Photo 14. G11 proposed new doorway: brick pier and 16th century stud & rail (partly masked by metal sheeting).

G12 Demolition of outhouse (range D)

- This is an addition of the late 19th century and has subsequently been altered (Photo 15). There are no compelling grounds to argue for its retention and removal would have the beneficial impact of exposing to view the 16th century timber framing it currently obscures (Photo 16). Query details of any proposed weatherproofing or remedial work to the timbers.

Photo 15. Outhouse (range **D**).

Photo 16. 16th century timberwork presently obscured by outhouse (range **D**).

5.2 First Floor

F1 Bedroom

- No changes proposed. This and the other first floor rooms in the south cross-wing appear to have solid, gypsum or lime-plaster type floors. These are covered with a mid 20th century product identified as 'liquid linoleum'. In these rooms this product is intact and in a good state of repair (c/f room F5 below) and the floors are reasonably level. The best approach would be

to leave this in place and carpet over as any attempt to remove it may damage the early floor surfaces below.

F2 Landing and **F3** En suite (see **Supplement** below)

- Inserted stud walls form a bathroom F3 within the 15th century cross-wing. The east wall of this cuts across a two-light window and defines a restricted landing area at the top of the stairs (Photo 17). It is proposed to move this wall, enlarging the landing area and exposing the whole of the window. Limited intrusive investigation was undertaken to determine the character and date of the stud walls forming the bathroom. These were found to consist of lime plaster on reeds, fixed to a series of trimmed roundwood poles. The plaster is painted blue grey over a series of earlier finishes (Photo 18). Subsequently the internal wall faces have been covered in plasterboard. These partition walls are likely to date to the 18th or early 19th century; perhaps this room was created as an additional bedroom around the time that the north end of the house was partitioned off as separate dwelling. The development plans will result in the removal of the east wall and partial truncation of the north wall. Re-siting the proposed new doorway from the south to the east wall will permit the retention of a substantial part of the north wall intact, ensuring that fabric evidence remains of this aspect of the building's history. The impact on those sections that will be lost could be adequately mitigated by recording prior to removal.

Photo 17. Partition wall between landing F2 and bathroom F3.

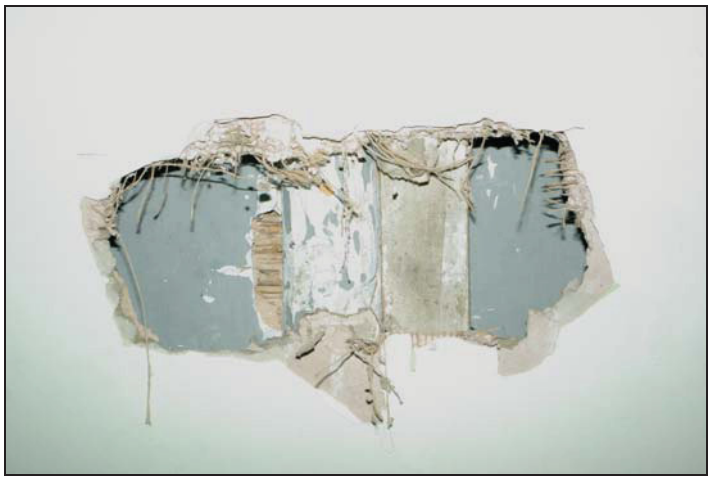

Photo 18. Fabric of stud partition wall between landing F2 and bathroom F3.

- The smaller bathroom formed by moving the walls described above would no longer be naturally lit. The possibility of inserting a narrow window between the studs of the south wall frame of the 15th century range was considered. Limited intrusive investigation of the infill between the studs (Photo 19) served to confirm that this was original infill consisting of split laths wedged into stave grooves in the sides of the studs, coated in straw-tempered daub, to the full thickness of the studs (c. 4 inches or 100mm). The insertion of a window at this point would represent a significant adverse impact upon the fabric of the 15th century range and is unlikely to be approved. An alternative means of introducing natural light to the bathroom would be to install an overlight above the new doorway in the south wall, providing borrowed light from the window on the landing.
- **Supplement**: the revised drawings propose the complete removal of the inserted partition walls forming bathroom F3, returning the landing area to its earlier proportions. The bathroom would be relocated within room F4 (see below). This arrangement overcomes the issues of providing natural light and ventilation to the bathroom and the routing of services within this 'sensitive' part of the building. It also creates a less restricted, well-lit first floor landing. Removing the bathroom from this area also has the longer term benefit of avoiding incremental damage from the inevitable periodic replacement of sanitary accommodation. Similarly any long term effects of prolonged exposure to a damp atmosphere on early timberwork, infill and thatch will be avoided. Removing the early stud walls will remove evidence of an episode in the history of the building; however this could be adequately mitigated by providing a record of this area in its present state prior to alteration.

Photo 19. Daub on split lath infill to south wall of 15th century range within bathroom F3.

F4 Bedroom (see **Supplement** below)

- The creation of a dressing room and en suite will alter the proportions of room F4 but the fabric impact is unlikely to be significant. There does not appear to be any provision of natural light to the dressing room or en suite, unless roof lights are proposed. Plumbing to the en suite should be arranged to minimise impact on the built fabric. Retention of the existing fire surround and skirting is advised (Photo 7).
- **Supplement**: The revised plans relocate the bathroom from the landing (see F2 & F3 above) to that part of Bedroom 2 previously proposed as a dressing area, adjacent to the en suite. Although this does alter the layout of the room, it has the significant advantage of allowing the plumbing and waste for the two bathrooms to be combined/rationalised and removes these services from the historically more sensitive area of F2. Natural light and ventilation to the bathroom and en suite are provided by conservation roof lights on the north slope of the slate-covered roof; the fabric impact of their installation is negligible.

F5 Bedroom: flooring

- The first floor structure in this room is of gypsum or lime-ash type. It is covered with a mid 20th century 'liquid linoleum' finish which has lifted in several areas, apparently as a result of damp penetration (Photo 20). Remedial work is likely to require the removal of the 'liquid linoleum' covering. In an area where the earlier surface is visible, this is cracked, though in general it appears to be level and may survive in reasonably good condition. If this is the case, the best approach will be to uncover the original surface (assuming the liquid linoleum can be removed without damage to the underlying surface) and carry out localised repairs as necessary; repair is likely to require specialist attention.

Photo 20. Room F5: gypsum or lime-ash type floor and later 'liquid linoleum' finish.

- Doorway between F5 & F7 (see also F7 below). It is proposed to create a doorway in the wall between bedroom F5 and the present airing cupboard within bathroom F7 to provide a first floor link between the two halves of the building. The proposed doorway would be located adjacent to the chimneystack. The wall at this point is timber-framed, as seen within room F7 (Photo 21), however the nature of the infill material was uncertain. Limited intrusive investigation was undertaken in order to clarify this issue. Two areas were opened up within room F5 (Photo 22). This revealed a blocked doorway at the point where the new doorway is proposed. The jambs are formed by softwood timbers notched into the 16th century tiebeam and nailed; these timbers have a simple bead moulding. The door head is formed by a softwood timber fixed to the underside of the tiebeam. The dimensions of the doorway are *c*.1.83m (6ft) high and 0.72m (28¼ in) wide. The doorframe is comparable with that leading into this room from the adjacent landing area F2 and is likely to be 18th century in date. The blocking consists of brickwork that is probably not later than the mid 19th century, bonded with straw-tempered lime mortar. The blocking presumably dates to the time that the house was sub-divided. Re-opening this doorway will re-unite the two halves of the building, representing a beneficial impact. The existing frame should be retained and reused.

Photo 21. Timber framing in wall between F5 & F7.

Photo 22. Blocked doorway in wall between F5 & F7 revealed by intrusive investigation.

F6 Bedroom: no changes proposed.

F7 En-suite

- The existing access arrangements will be revised with the present entrance to bathroom F7 blocked and the new entrance being the present doorway into the airing cupboard, off a new corridor. The corridor is created by removing the wall between the airing cupboard and the cupboard opening onto the landing F8. The other end of the corridor opens into bedroom F5 through a new doorway (see above). The wall between the two cupboards is a modern stud partition and its removal will have no significant impact. Similarly, blocking the existing doorway into F7 will not impact significantly upon any historic fabric. Existing service runs should be utilised for the new en suite fittings as far as possible.

F8 Landing: no changes proposed.

F9 & **F10** Bedroom, en-suite, bathroom

- Removal of wall between bedrooms F9 & F10 and wall between bedroom F10 & W.C. and erection of new walls to form one bedroom with en suite and separate bathroom. The existing wall between bedrooms F9 and F10 is of 20th century construction, carried on the steel I-beam visible from below in G11. Intrusive investigation was not undertaken but it is likely to be brick-built. Its removal will not have any significant impact upon the historic character or fabric of the building. Similarly revisions to the sanitary accommodation need not significantly impact upon historic fabric, however careful consideration of the siting of fittings and routing of services is required. The first floor in this area consists of modern boards. It was noted at the time of the survey that live woodworm was present in the modern doors to bedroom F10 and the adjacent W.C. Insertion of the small window in the present W.C. has damaged one of the structural braces to the timber frame, as well as being visually unpleasing to the exterior; any proposals to alter the current arrangement should avoid further damage to the structural member.

Photo 23. Inserted wall separating rooms F9 & F10 proposed for removal.

5.3 General Comments

- There is evidence of damp in floors and walls in various ground floor rooms. Query details of any proposed remedial works.
- There is the potential for survival of buried archaeological remains associated with the existing building and/or the suspected earlier hall range. Any ground reduction work inside the house has the potential to impact upon such remains, requiring appropriate archaeological intervention. Query details of any proposed ground reduction works.
- Careful consideration needs to be given to the routing of services (heating, plumbing, waste, electrics, media installations, etc) in order to avoid damage to early built fabric, including timber framing, infill, solid upper floors, skirtings, etc. Wherever possible existing service runs should be reused in order to minimise impact.
- Inevitably there will be a variety of minor works relating to the development proposals which it is not possible to specify at this stage. All contractors (and sub-contractors) employed on the project should be aware of the historic significance of the building and working practices should be appropriate and sympathetic to the structure.
- **Supplement**: it is proposed to replace all of the windows, within the existing openings (except for one of the Kitchen G4 windows which is converted into a French door - see 5.1 above). All

of the proposed new windows on the front (west) elevation would be painted timber, as would those on the east gable end of range C. Elsewhere timber frames with metal casements are proposed. Typically the fenestration of a building which has evolved over several centuries will be mixed, reflecting changing architectural styles and episodes of historic repair or renewal, and wholesale replacement of windows within a listed building would not normally be approved. In this instance the issue is complicated by the fact that all of the existing windows appear to date to the first half of the 20th century and are variable in terms of their architectural style and integrity, build quality and state of preservation. Conservation best practice would advocate repair of existing windows rather than replacement. In most if not all cases windows could be replaced without significant impact upon historic fabric, however the visual impact would be more significant, resulting in a homogeneity that would not be appropriate to the age and complexity of the building and which currently does not exist, despite the fact that all of the windows were replaced within a relatively short timespan in the early 20th century. A reasonable case could be made for replacing certain individual windows, for example the glass brick window in the front (west) elevation of range B. It is possible that the replacement of other individual windows might be considered, for example where a window of no intrinsic architectural or historical merit is in a particularly poor state of repair; any such proposals would require detailed justification.

6. Bibliography

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ULAS 2004. *An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment for a Proposed Residential Development at Land to the rear of The Old House, 16 Station Road, Littlethorpe, Narborough, Leicestershire (SP 541 970)*. ULAS report 2004-151.

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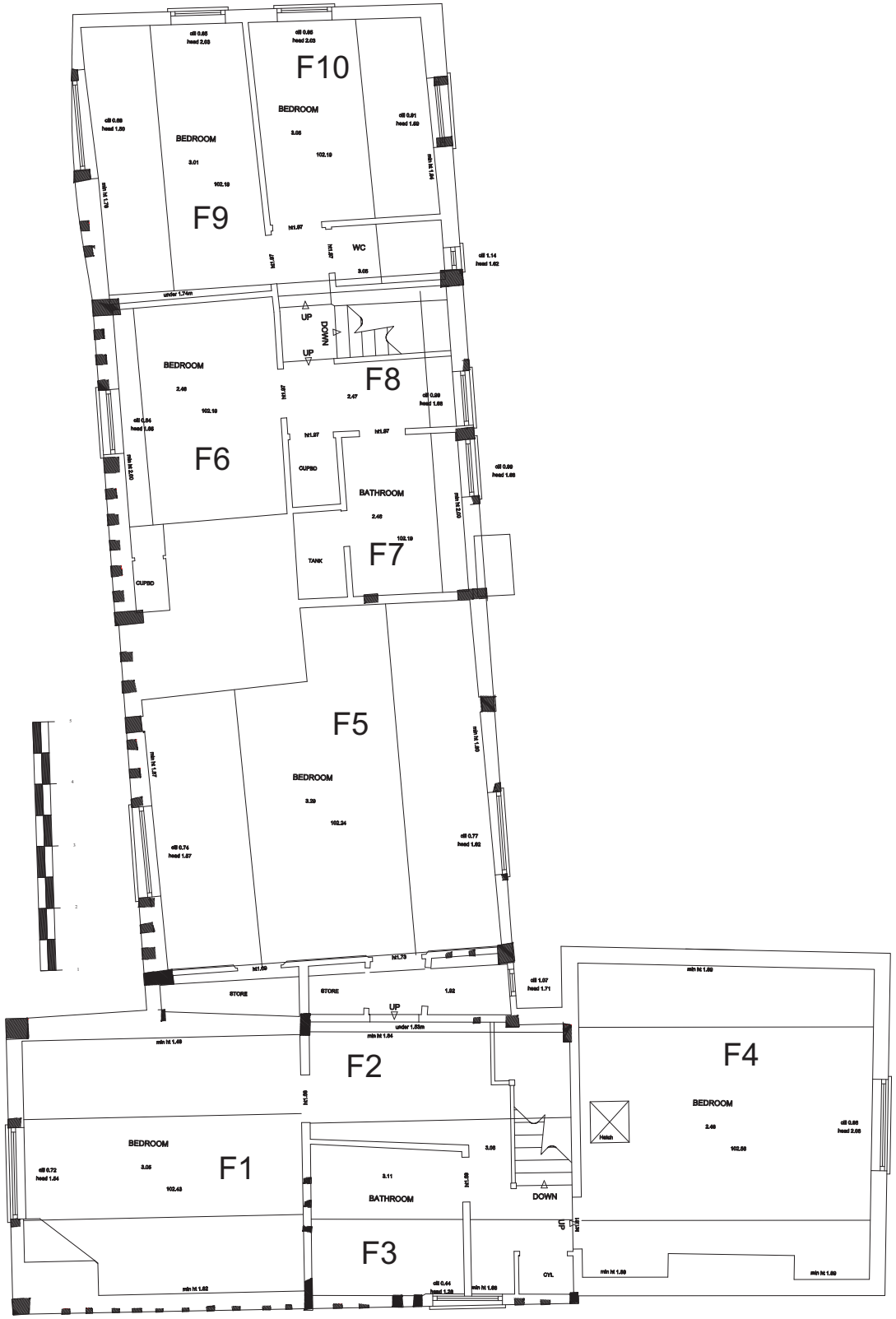
Appendix: Listing description

Date listed: 13 October 1952
Date of last amendment: 23 February 1987
Grade II

NARBOROUGH STATION ROAD SP 59 NW Littlethorpe 7/65 No 16 (The Old House) 13.10.52 (formerly listed as Littlethorpe House Farm- House) II House. Of 2 C16 builds with c.1930s fenestration. Timber-frame with close studding to front and right side of upper storey. Main left wing has curved braces, right wing has curved tension braces. Whitewashed brick and plaster infill, thatched roof, whitewashed brick chimneys to centre and to front right corner of cross wing. L-plan, with projecting gabled cross wing to right. 2 storeys. Left wing is of 3 bays with C20 barred wooden casements, mostly of 3 lights but with 2-light to first floor centre and single metal casement to ground floor left. C20 door to right with flat wooden hood on shaped brackets. 2-bay cross wing has 3-light casements to front, the lower wooden, the upper leaded. Upper storey is jettied to front on beam ends, with moulded brackets to either side and renewed corner posts carried down to ground. C19 whitewashed brick extensions to rear of cross wing. Interior: cross wing has queen strut trusses whereas left wing has raking queen post trusses with principal rafters set in from ends of tie-beams; heavy floor joists, those in left wing re-used and part smoke-blackened; left bay part rebuilt with C20 floor. House said to have been built 1560s for John Bent (Roy Millward, A History of Leicestershire and Rutland, 1985, p.72), but left wing may incorporate timbers of an older hall.

GROUND FLOOR

Figure 1. Ground floor plan as existing with room numbers. Scale 1:100. North at top.



FIRST FLOOR

Figure 2. First floor plan as existing with room numbers. Scale 1:100. North at top.

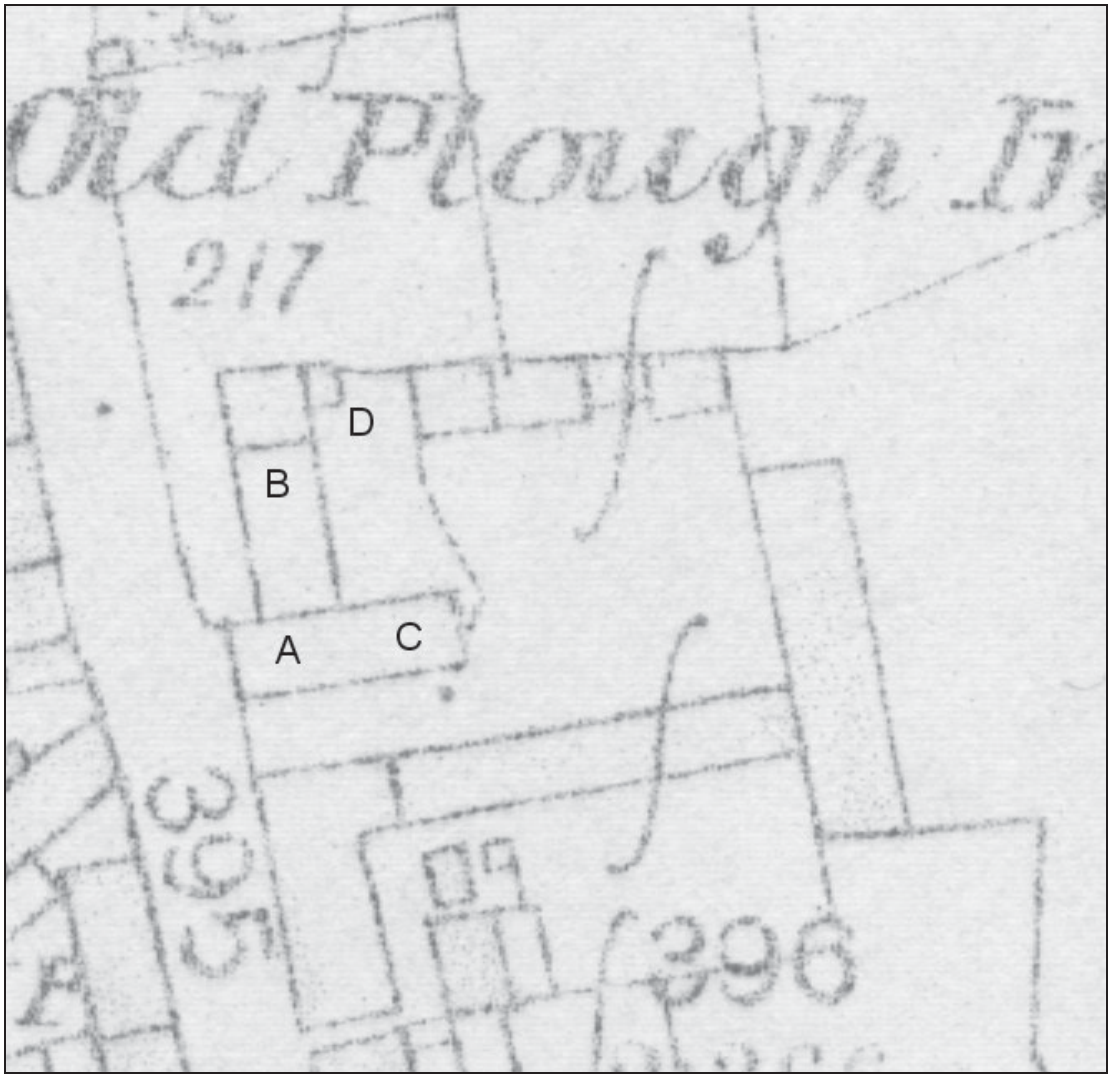


Figure 3. Extract from First Edition Ordnance Survey map sheet XXXVI.16 (1888). Ranges A-D indicated. Not to Scale.

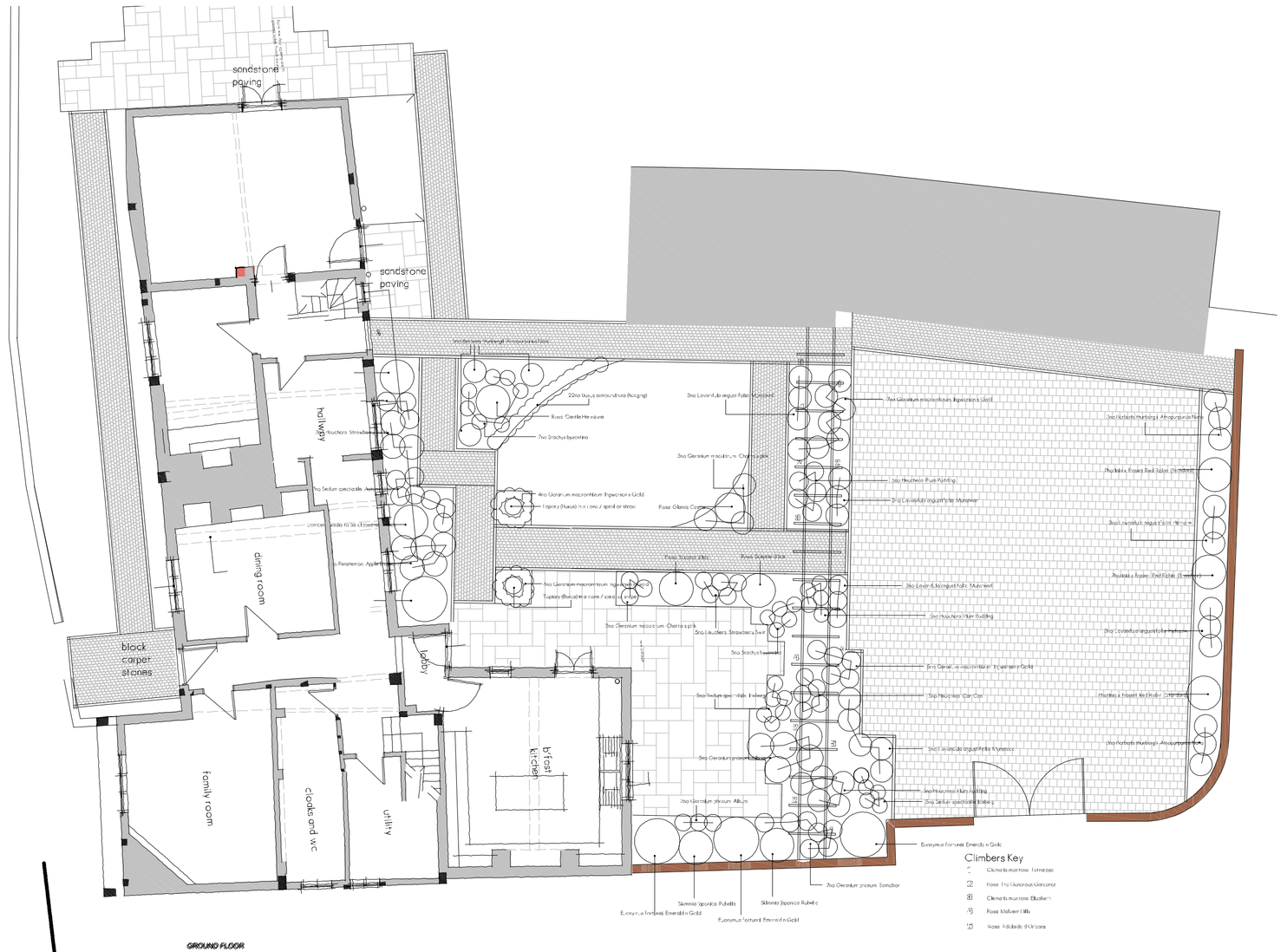
PROPOSED WORKS TO THE OLD HOUSE, STATION ROAD, LITTLETHORPE FOR J & N BUILDERS LTD

FRONT ELEVATION

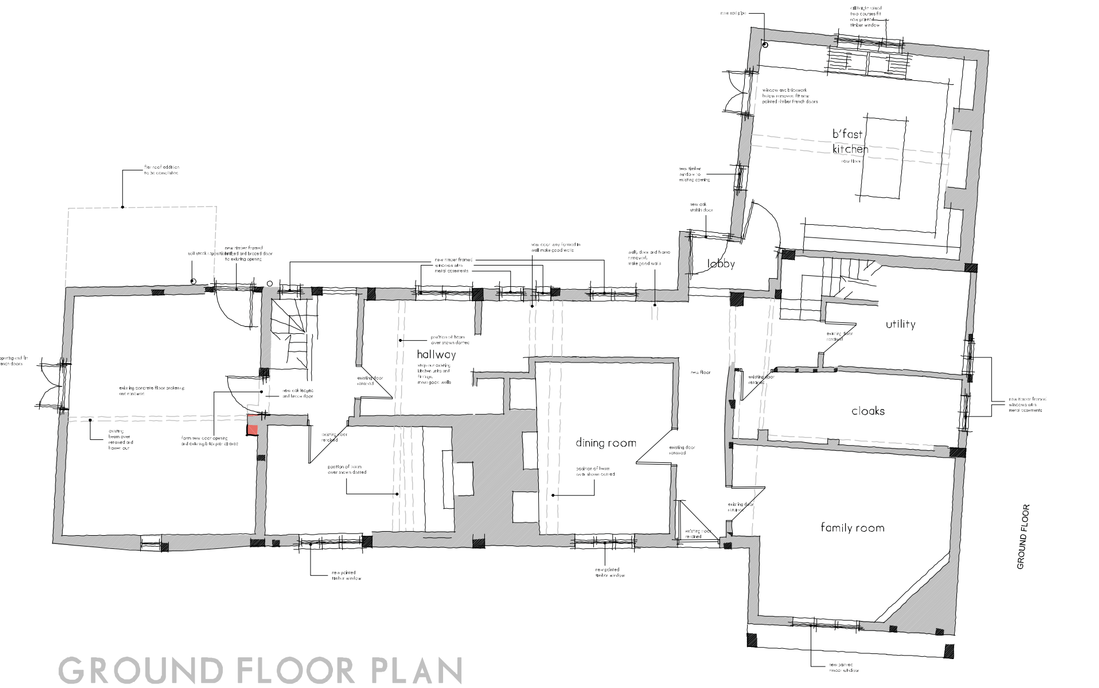
SIDE ELEVATION

REAR ELEVATION

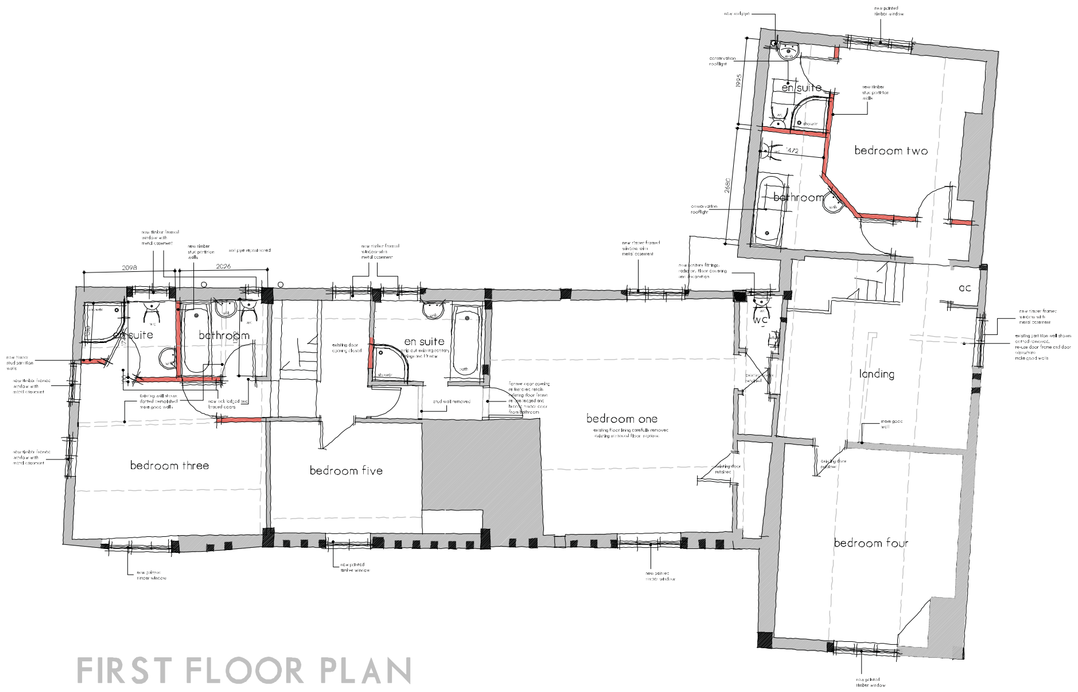
SIDE ELEVATION



COURTYARD LANDSCAPING SCHEME



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

SITE LOCATION PLAN

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27, Trinity Close,
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Leicestershire
LE65 2GR

Tel 01530 416700
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project:
Proposed Works
The Old House, 16, Station Road, Littlethorpe, Leicestershire

client
J & N Builders Ltd

drawing
Planning Drawing 1 of 2

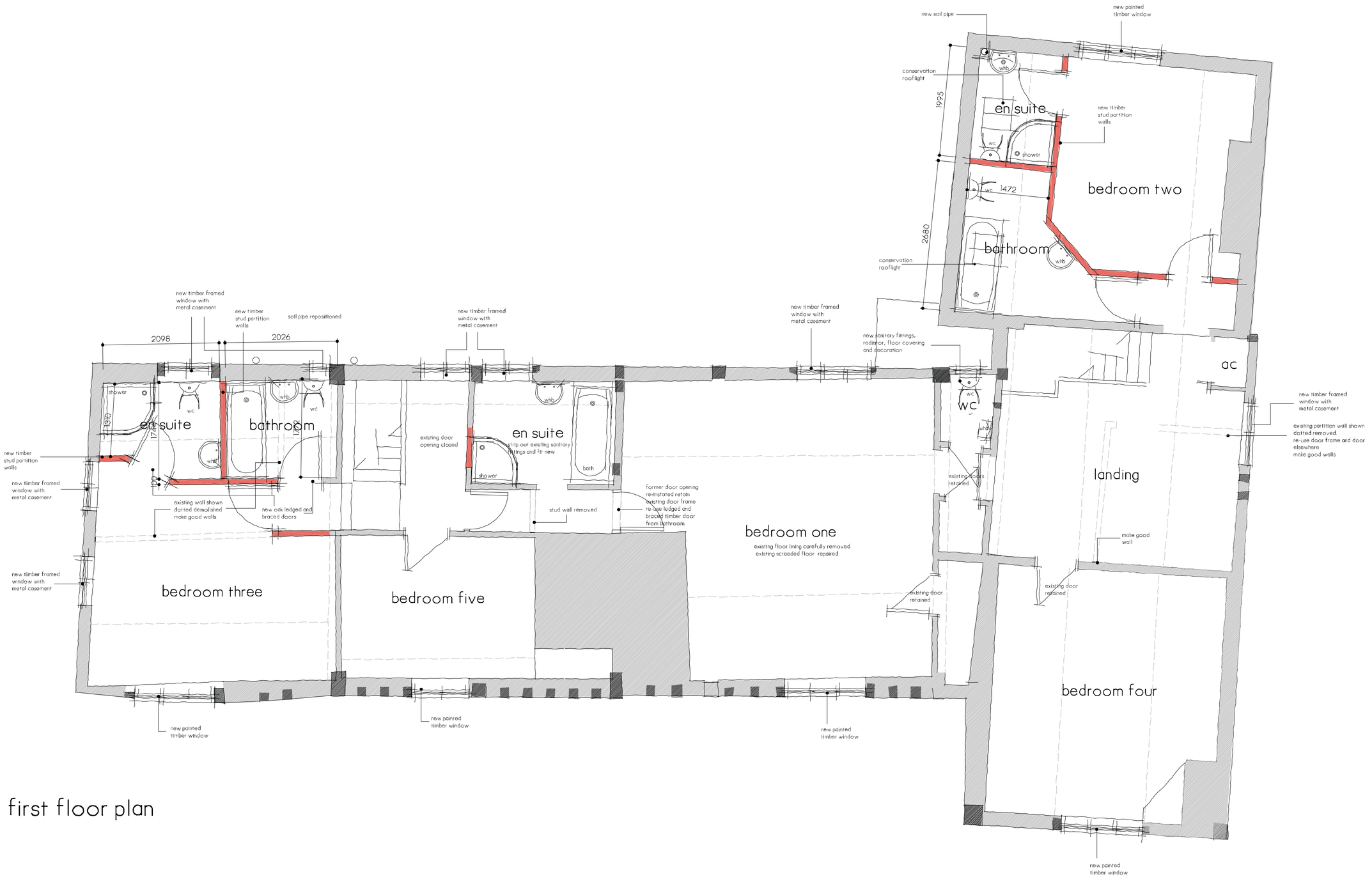
drawing no.
477.JN-46

drawing by.
Darren Insley

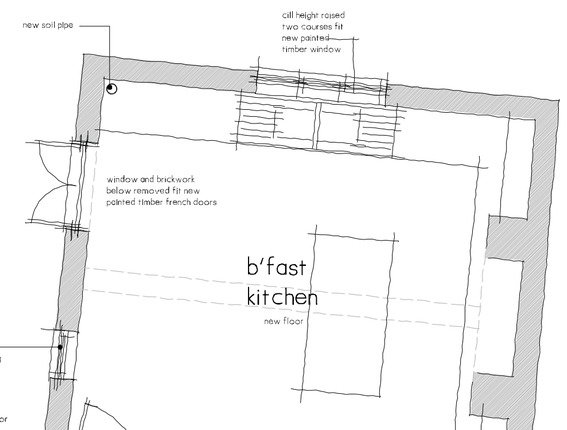
revision

date:
April 2008

scale
1:100, 1:1250



first floor plan



ground floor plan

GROUND FLOOR

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Contractors must verify all dimensions on site before commencing work or preparing shop drawings.

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Proposed alterations and replacement windows
Old House, 16, Station Road, Littlethorpe, Leicestershire.

client
J & N Builders Ltd
drawing
Planning Drawing 2 of 2

drawing no.
477.JN-47
drawing by.
Darren Insley
revision

date:
April 2008
scale
1:50