

**ROE GREEN HOUSE, ROE GREEN
SANDON
HERTFORDSHIRE**

HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD & ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING



Essex County Council
Field Archaeology Unit

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Client: Mrs Lizzy Rudd

FAU Project No.: 1788

NGR: TL 3095 3389

OASIS No.: essexcou1-53021

Planning Application: 1/07/0220 & 0227

Dates of Fieldwork: June 2007 to April 2008

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A programme of building recording and archaeological monitoring was undertaken by Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) prior to and during alterations to Roe Green House, a Grade II listed late 16th century farmhouse. The work was commissioned by the owner, Mrs Lizzy Rudd, and carried out in accordance with a brief issued by the Hertfordshire County Council County Historic Environment Unit (HCC CHEU), who also monitored the work.

The survey follows an unfinished building appraisal by timber-framed building specialist Adrian Gibson, carried out on behalf of the architects, Donald Purkiss Associates.

Copies of the report will be supplied to CHEU, the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HHER) the County Records Office (CRO) and the LPA. The archive will be stored at the CRO at County Hall, Hertford. An online OASIS record has been created for the project at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/oasis/index.cfm>.

2.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND

2.1 Site location and description

Roe Green is a hamlet within the parish of Sandon situated along a minor road at TL 3095 3389, to the west of the A10 Buckland turning (fig. 1). Roe Green House is the Grade II-listed former farmhouse to Roe Green Farm, which lies to the south. It is now in separate ownership and was undergoing refurbishment at the same time as the house.

The house (LBS 162408) occupies an irregular plot with extensive lawns and driveway to the west (fig.1). The main core of the house is timber-framed on a north-east to south-west alignment, with later brick-built additions producing an irregular plan form (fig.1). It is fully-furnished and used as a family home.

The surrounding landscape is a mixture of gently undulating pasture and arable land lying on boulder clay subsoil.

2.2 Planning background

A planning application for internal refurbishment of parts of the house and development around the exterior led HCC HEU to recommend a programme of building recording prior to the start of works and archaeological monitoring during the development, based on advice given in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning (DOE 1990). The latter works concentrated on newly exposed areas of internal wall framing and the digging of foundations for a new garage, house extension and service trenches.

2.3 Historical background

Roe Green House is situated within Area of Archaeological Significance no. 198 (HCC HEU 2007) that includes the medieval settlement of Roe Green, a common to the east, cropmarks around Roe Wood to the north and remnants of an irregular moat around the farmstead.

The house is listed as being 17th century or earlier, partly rebuilt in the mid to late 19th century (LBS 162408). A survey undertaken for the architects, Donald Purkiss Associates, led to a more detailed assessment. Unfortunately, the author of this work, Adrian Gibson, passed away before the report was written up. He suggested six phases of development based on constructional and architectural detail, beginning in the 1580s with further additions in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.

The findings of this report are based on the results of Adrian Gibson's preliminary work and the current survey. In addition, cartographic and documentary research was undertaken at the County Records Office, Hertford, which provided information on the development of Roe Green Farm in the Victorian era but little of value for the main subject of this study, the house. The suggested development of the structure is summarised below and the main building phases identified in figure 4. Subsequent paragraphs deal with the farmstead and later developments.

The main central range is believed to date from c.1580 (phase 1), with a possible 'high end' to the south-west (the current 'snug'), although it is uncertain whether this third bay was added slightly later (Gibson 2007). A cross wing was added c.1620 to the north-east end, forming a 'T-shape' and providing a new high end/solar (phase 2). A kitchen range was added to the opposite end (phase 2), and a dairy/cellar added in the 18th century (phase 3). Later on in the 18th century (phase 3), the ends of the cross wing were extended in brick and the roadside elevation re-faced and upgraded as a formal entrance by adding a porch and 'lifting' the roof. A new kitchen block was added to the rear. During the early 19th century Regency period, the exterior was refenestrated and most of the doors replaced (A. Gibson 2007).

19th century maps show the house as it appears today, with farm buildings to the south (figs.2 & 3). 'Roegreen Farm' comprises the farmhouse, or 'homestead' (CRO DSA4 90/1) with a yard to the south which is open to the north and bordered on two sides by barns (fig.3). In 1841 (Sandon tithe award, DSA4 90/1) the farm was owned by the Fordham family, lords of the manor of Royston (Kelly's Directory 1851), and occupied by one of the family, John. The main barn to the west is a large aisled grade II-listed barn, presently undergoing conversion. It is dated from the list description to the 17th or 18th century (LBS 162408), which seems rather conservative given the barn contains the same jowled posts and a queen strut roof that would easily fit in with the early parts of the house (i.e. c.1580-1620).

The farmyard stayed roughly the same at least until 1939 (provisional OS map). It is unclear when the farm closed, but in recent years the farm was sold off and the house became Roe Green House, a house of the same name having previously stood further to the east (1914 sales catalogue CRO D/ERy/B409). Having submitted plans to the LPA, timber-framed specialist Adrian Gibson was commissioned by the Architects, Donald Purkiss Associates (DPA), to undertake an investigation into the development of the house. Unfortunately, he passed away before he was able to write up his notes, which were transcribed by Alan Smith of DPA and passed onto the FAU.

3.0 OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the historic building survey was, as outlined in the brief (HCC HEU 2007), to provide a high quality record of the structure prior to alteration and place the structure within its local and regional historical context. A general record of the house was made based on areas of visible wall fabric. Freshly exposed areas of framing were drawn and recorded during the alterations to further understand the development of the structure.

Outside the building, archaeological monitoring aimed to investigate and record any archaeological deposits or features revealed in groundworks relating to the medieval origins of the site and its subsequent post-medieval development.

4.0 DESCRIPTION OF WORKS

The standing building was recorded using drawings (floor plans and elevations) and the earlier survey, which is included in the archive. An emphasis was placed on recording architectural detailing and areas of timber-framing important to the development of the early house (and primarily freshly-exposed) rather than discussing later developments that were already evident and not impacted by the current works programme. Whenever practical, freshly-exposed areas of important timber-framing were drawn and recorded. Given that the timber frame is largely covered over by historic plaster (or occasionally more modern materials) the survey is based on limited evidence, although a good appreciation of the development of the house was made in the circumstances.

Details of the proposed building works were forwarded by the architects and areas of interest identified for monitoring/recording were included in the FAU written scheme of investigation. Site visits were then made as required to carry out the works.

A series of photographs (digital and black & white 120 and 35mm print) were taken externally and internally. Specific shots were taken of any areas of important architectural detail, fixtures or fittings. A representative selection of photographs is reproduced at the back of the report as plates 1-24. The remainder can be found in the archive.

5.0 THE STANDING BUILDING

Roe Green House is a complex mixture of styles and materials reflecting its long past. The plan form comprises a three-bay timber central range with a three-bay cross-wing at the north-east and single range at the opposite end, with brick-built additions (fig. 1). It appears to have been built as two storeys, rather than as a hall house, with an attic added later. The roofs are predominantly pegtiled (except for the kitchen, which is slate).

The exterior of the original heavy primary-braced timber frame is largely covered in modern rough cast render, and the cross wing has been re-faced in brick. Some remnants of weatherboarding and possible lime plaster remain on the least-exposed south-west end, facing the farmstead. No framing is exposed on the external walls. Some framing is exposed internally but in most cases the studwork was removed during 18th or 19th centuries internal alterations.

The following descriptions discuss the external character of the house and its internal features by phase, which may be referenced to figures 4-7, the phase plan and existing floor plans respectively.

5.1 External description

North-east elevation

The symmetrical north-east elevation (plate 1) faces the road and provided the formal entrance to the 18th century house through the projecting central bay and former porch, now partly hidden by a hedge. Three bays/rooms are presented, divided by slender chimney shafts. Contained behind the façade is the 17th century cross wing, which has been re-faced in Flemish-bonded brickwork. The two bays either side have horned margin sash windows on the ground floor and 8:4 pane sash windows on the first floor, all recessed with cambered heads. The window on the south east bay is a dummy window (plate 1, left), perhaps replacing an earlier one (Gibson 2007). The two floors are separated by a three-course plat band that steps up in the centre porch (Listed Buildings Online) and continues around the refurbished cross wing (plates 2 & 3). In the central bay, the band frames an eight-paned casement window, set into the former porch, whose front doorway is indicated by a hood mould scar (plate 1). The head of the central sash window is held within the original eaves, which jut forward from the central bay, indicating the former eaves level and roof pitch, which was raised to present a more orderly frontage in the Regency period (plate 1).

North-west elevation

The main entrance is now on the north-western side of the house facing the gravel driveway. The elevation comprises three multi-period bays, the first of which is an 18th century extension and widening of the 17th century cross wing to create a larger living room (fig.4). This first gable (plate 2, left) contains a slate-roofed bay window fitted with a central margin sash and a 1:2 light sash over. French windows have been inserted where the brickwork finishes (fig. 5) onto the pathway that leads towards the front door. The raised eaves at the front and steeper pitch of the back roof are apparent in plate 2. It appears from the slight bow in the roofline between the central bay and cross wing (plate 2) that the original roof was dropped (by about half a metre) when the wing was widened, though the gable is still higher and thus dominant in relation to the 'low end'.

The middle bay includes part of the original late 16th century range, the roof of which extends into the third bay, behind the utility room (plate 2). The timber wall frame is coated in cement render and the semi-glazed four panel front door belongs to the 19th century phase. A pair of four-pane casement windows are situated to the right hand side of the door, lighting the shower room and bedroom. A larger casement stands slightly set-back on the first floor, with a Victorian 3:6 sash to its left (plate 2). The beginning of the roof bow corresponds to the iwall plate viewed inside the first floor bathroom (fig. 6).

The final bay on the north-west side comprises a single storey timber-framed gabled service/kitchen wing and a brick-built dairy/cold store (Gibson 2007), linked by a cat-slide roof. This wing is smaller than the main cross wing, signifying the 'low end', projecting from below, rather than above, the eaves. Its main features are a small slightly off-centre ground floor modern casement window and a fixed 6-pane Georgian-style window above (plate 2); later replacements to a two-light mullion window seen in the survey. Judging from its internal framing, the service range has a likely 17th century build date and the chimney between the wing and snug (end of the main range, fig. 5) contains 17th century bricks (Gibson 2007). It is the only early good-sized chimney and contemporary with the wing.

The gable roof is pitched at 50°, reducing its slope for the catslide-roofed cellar/dairy, which is believed to be an 18th century addition (Gibson 2007), probably pre-dating the upgrading of the main facade. The wooden lattice vent, partly obscured by the rose bush in plate 2 enabled fresh air to circulate inside and is set low in relation to the floor level inside. The main part of the house appears not to have been built with a cellar.

South-west elevation

The south-west elevation, formerly facing onto the farmyard, shows the relationship between the main part of the house and the low end with greater clarity and suggests the stack and kitchen wing are built onto the main range and therefore contemporary, (plate 3). This side of the house has a more sheltered position and retains an earlier lath and plaster coating, alongside timber boarding to the lower part (plate 3), which is also found on the old external wall of the snug, now inside the house (fig. 5). The door into the old service wing, currently the utility room, has modern fixtures but stands in the traditional frame. Fenestrating the gable end are 12-paned fixed windows on the ground floor, and six-light casements lighting the attic (plate 3).

South-east elevation

The remaining elevation, on the south-east side (plate 4), faces onto the back garden and comprises the 16th century range and two, rather bold, projecting 18th century gables, one of which wraps around the 17th century cross wing (fig. 4). Following round from the end gable described in the paragraph above, the older part of the house was bricked-in during the 18th century and re-fitted with contemporary spiral handled casement windows (Alcock & Hall 1994), lighting rooms on both levels. A charming four-pane casement lights the upstairs corridor above a triangular tile-clad open porch. There are similar, though smaller, casement windows on the porch side of the brick extension, where there is a fourth chimney supplying the cooking range in the 18th century/current kitchen (plate 4).

As with the main north-west elevation, the roof of the old cross wing was lowered and altered to a shallower pitch in the 18th century when the wing was widened. The cross wing extension has a bay window and both of the Georgian gables (plate 4, right) have margin glazing on the ground floor and 2:2 sash windows above, inserted slightly later in the Regency period (Gibson 2007).

5.2 Internal description

Internal descriptions focus on the standing evidence for the four main building phases identified in the initial survey and developed in the subsequent works, with priority given to the two early phases. Full access to the rooms was granted by the owner during building works. Much of the information below is based on the limited areas of already-exposed built fabric, which was at times only partial, and some newly exposed areas. The rooms are described in the following text under their current functions, with former historic functions alluded to. Built into the phasing are possible sub-phases where changes have been made either at the same time or in a short time period after.

Phase 1 Main range (late 16th century, c.1580)

The central core belongs to a three-bay two-storey c.12 x 5m in-line house, gabled to the north-east and south-west, comprising the present ground floor entrance hall, shower room, corridor and bedroom and most likely the snug, though this may be slightly later (Gibson 2007). Wall framing is primary-braced in oak and elm, with gently-swelling jowls on the posts, diamond mullion windows and lambs tongue stops to bridging and ceiling joists, suggesting a date from about 1580 (Gibson 2007). There is some main framing to the two end gable walls of the original house and two internal partition walls exposed, though often the studwork has been removed or hidden beneath lime plaster.

The majority of the north-east gabled front of the house was probably removed when the cross wing was added, or else during the extensive 18th century alterations. Its position is marked by the gable midrail on the ground floor between the entrance hall and stair hall (fig. 5, plate 5). The midrail soffit shows sockets for pegged studwork, c.13cm in width (5 inch) with narrow gaps of c.27cm between. On the south-east end are empty sockets for two with 2 inch diamond-shaped shafts, representing a three light mullion window (fig. 5, plate 6), which allowing for the later corridor, makes the window slightly off-centre. The corner posts are hidden. Nothing was seen of the upper register on the first floor, which stands between the corridor and middle bedroom (fig. 6), but better evidence is found in the roofspace (fig. 7) where good pegged studs and collars remain behind the 17th century cross wing roof (plate 7). Plate 7 also shows some more interesting features, namely the clasped purlin roof, a common characteristic of post-medieval houses (Gibson 1994) and well-preserved rafters. There is also clear evidence of external plaster (plate 7). From analysis of the other side, it seems the old purlin was cut back at the junction with the cross wing (Gibson 2007), which could suggest a cut-back jettied gable fronting the roadside. As none of the exposed roof timbers are smoke blackened, it is unlikely to have been built as a hall house.

Behind the front gable is part of the partition wall between the original service room and hall exists, located between the entrance hall and shower room (fig.5), which continues on the two floors above. Some early studwork was observed by the architects either side of the shower room doorway in preliminary works, augmented by later primary-braced infilling attached to the midrail (plate 8). Above this, on the first floor, the studwork of the upper register was most likely removed when the bathroom was created (fig.6, plate 9), but important evidence remains. The tie beam soffit shows pegged sockets for five studs of slightly wider scantling than those at the front (16cm) and wider gaps between (c.35cm). Between the first and second are sockets for a three-light diamond mullion window, set centrally like the window at the front, but now hidden by a bridging joist inserted with the attic

in the 17th century (Gibson 2007) (fig. 6, plate 10). The presence of an internal mullion window is unusual and suggests the beam was reused from another structure to create the partition wall. After all, if the wall was plastered over, the window would not be seen. Between the studs are grooves for wattles and a wide triple-peg mortice for a large brace on the south-west end (fig. 6), which is out of place with the primary-braced build, showing further evidence that this timber is reused.

A bridging joist is pegged to the tie beam soffit, over the mullion sockets (plate 10), which continues into the bedroom behind to support the attic floor (fig. 6). The joist has lambs tongue stops to either end, as do the exposed ceiling joists in the bathroom but not on the wall between the bathroom and bedroom, which is a later insertion. Attics were common features of 17th century Hertfordshire houses (Gibson 1994) and may have been included over the early range with the cross wing. As the bridging joist on the other side of the plate is not exposed and the ceiling here likely to be a later insertion, it is assumed the old service room kept its first open to the roof for longer.

The bathroom partition wall/service room partition continues into the second/attic floor where studs are arranged equally either side of an inserted modern cupboard entrance that has eliminated the central stud (plate 11). Although substantial timbers, at least one of the studs has a waney appearance and their spacing appears wider than those below, which again suggests the plate below is reused. There is a noticeable curve to the collar (plate 11).

The south-west unit (snug & playroom, figs. 5 & 6) is believed to be the original parlour range of the three bay house. It is here the characteristics of the early building can be properly observed, i.e. gradually-swelling jowls to the wall posts and lambs tongue stops to the ceiling beams. The bridging joist and ceiling in the snug slopes downwards at an angle to the end wall (plate 12). Only the framing of the upper register is exposed, on the playroom side (fig.6, plate 13) and this is taken as being representative of the appearance of the main bay walls. The timbers are reminiscent of those seen in the attic. Framing is primary-braced, with the two slightly-curved braces falling to two central posts that support the inserted bridging joist embedded in the ceiling (plate 13). Some of the studwork is relatively uneven compared to that seen in the gable, but conforms well in size and spacing. Studs are pegged to the frame and there are several chiselled carpenter's marks, many of which are 'tagged', though they follow no continuous sequence. Carpenter's marks were not meant to be shown and nail marks in the timbers show the wall was formerly plastered. There appears to be an earlier blocked doorway on the left side (plate 13), pre-dating the corridor insertion and entrance whose architrave does not respect the wall frame. Beside the doorway, the south-east wall

plate and its counterpart the other side are attached onto the bedroom wall plate (fig.6) by simple single-pegged face-halved scarf joints. They point to a fairly 'primitive' build, but without other contemporary examples to compare, it is difficult to tell how they fit in. An inserted floor clamp is nailed across the north-west plate to hold the ceiling joists and perhaps bolster the scarf joint on this side. A back stair leads from the playroom to the second floor, separated by a nailed stud partition clearly of some age, though not original. The staircase offers a rare opportunity to view two jowled bay posts, but unfortunately nothing of the frame (plate 14).

Phase 2: Cross wing and south-west kitchen wing (early 17th century, c.1620)

A transverse three-bay two-storey cross wing was placed against the north-east end to provide a new 'high end' with a new kitchen wing and stack added at the opposite 'low end'. It is likely the attic was inserted in the main range in the same period. The exact sequence is unclear, but is likely to have been soon after the primary construction, around 1620 (Gibson 2007). Only the kitchen wing contains exposed stud walling to this phase, which is primary-braced like that of the original range (plate 13). It also has an in-filled diamond mullion window (fig. 8b).

The gables and rear wall were removed during the cross wing extensions of the 18th century. Only part of the roadside wall is believed to survive. On the ground floor, the extent of the timber cross wing is suggested by a boxed beam (perhaps containing the end wall plate) in the living room and ceiling scars in the dining room (fig. 5), roughly equidistant from the central bay. The central bay projects outwards towards the road, suggesting the remains of an under-built jetty facing the roadside, although if this was the case the remains of the jetty on the other two bays were removed during modifications to the front. The main evidence for a jetty is in the stair hall, where the binding joist runs to the end of the front projecting bay (fig.5, plate 15). The end of the joist is carved with the same lambs tongue stops (plate 16), used in important timber houses until the end of the 17th century (Hall 2005). Closer inspection of the plans shows a slight misalignment with the other two bays that suggests the central bay may have been an extra bay to the phase 1 house, though there is no clear evidence to support this. All the exposed timbers upstairs appear contemporary with the Georgian alterations rather than the 17th century cross wing (plate 17).

The present utility room is believed to have been constructed as a kitchen/dairy unit (Gibson 2007) some time in the early 17th century, with the large stack containing the cooking hearth on this side. The utility room has clearly been built onto the snug as the two wall plates are butted rather than jointed together (fig. 5) and early clapboarding appears to have been

trapped under the kitchen roofline (plate 18), similar though earlier than that seen on the south-west wall which covers the join between the two builds.

The kitchen wing was built open to the rafters and has a primary-braced timber-frame (plates 18, 19 & 20) composed of studs of equal quality and scantling to those in the end wall of the phase 1 house. Much original timberwork is exposed within this room and during the current alterations more stud walling was revealed beneath modern plasterboard (drawn as fig. 8). This showed the gable frame had been cut and under-built in 14 courses of modern brick on a narrow timber sill (fig. 8a) and that the external doorway, leading out to the farm yard sits within a historic opening (fig. 8b). The figures also show that the studs are slightly narrower at times and more varied in size (10-13cm). Some are waney, more indicative of later framing and pegged to the mid rail but not to the wall plate above, rather than fully-pegged like those in the earlier range. Some narrow modern studs have been added to square up for windows, which are inserted above and below a blocked two-light diamond mullion window, mainly obscured by plaster (fig. 8a, plate 20). The wall plate above the window steps-up either side (plate 20) and has been interpreted as a cut-out for hinged shutters (Gibson 2007). A similar timber is found on the south-west wall that appears to be simply a decorative feature (fig. 8b).

The two corner posts display a slight suggestion of jowling. Narrow wind braces have been added to the roof frame, which is plastered on the inside obscuring its construction. The large brick stack for what was once a big inglenook fireplace (Gibson 2007) extends out from the north-west side into the kitchen and it is clear from the way a brick stabilising wall has been built with the frame (plates 21 & 22) that the two are contemporary.

Phase 3: Cellar/dairy (early 18th century)

Built almost 1m below ground level, the brick-built cellar (plate 21) would have been cool enough to store perishable commodities such as meat and cheese and may also have housed a well (Gibson 2007). A brick floor and gully, draining to the outside, meant it could be washed down easily (fig. 5 and). It is believed to have been built relatively soon after the kitchen as the two 'work together' as one unit (Gibson 2007), though the bricks suggest an 18th century date. Catslide-roofed dairy buildings were often added to existing service ranges, though usually as outshots on the rear wall (Gibson 1994).

Phase 4: 18th century alterations

The following text deals largely with those changes affecting the historic core of the house rather than reiterating descriptions from the historical background section.

Extensive alterations were carried out in the 18th century to the early 17th century cross wing. Upstairs there are partly-exposed wall plates that appear to be contemporary with 18th century stud walling, and replaced beams contemporary with the roof raise and rebuild, clearly seen in the north-west bedroom, where the inserted front wall plate is cut back to expose pegging for hidden narrow studwork (fig. 6, plate 17). Examples of 18th century stud walling were observed during building works on the rear of the north-west wing and between the present dining room and kitchen (plate 23), typically un-braced and built on brick plinths.

Observation was difficult, but over the old cross wing, the roof framing has inserted, nailed raking queen posts trusses and incorporates some early timbers on the south-west side, but apparently not on the opposite side (plate 24). The binding joist in plate 24 has been turned and new mortices made. The old mortices show it was exposed in the ceiling originally, like those in the main range.

6.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING

Six areas were excavated to the west and east of the house, consisting of service runs and groundworks for a new garage and extension (fig.9). Full details are included in the archive. No historic deposits or features were recorded. The trenches were recorded in the sequence they were dug and comprise the following:

- Trench 1 (T1) Klausthauler biodisc sewage treatment plant beside the front driveway
- T2 Outflow trench from biodisc into western ditch
- T3 Rain/foul water run to biodisc from former garage, linking to existing pipes
- T4 Short pipe trench in back garden linking to existing drain run
- T5 Foundation trenches for utility room extension
- T6 Foundation trenches for new garage

Trench 1 was excavated to a depth of 2.2m below existing ground level and consisted of a shallow mid grey clay silt topsoil (context 1), 0.2m thick, above a 0.7m thick layer of brown clay subsoil, disturbed by roots, in turn overlying natural boulder clay (3).

Further along to the west, in T2, topsoil remained constant, but context 2 became thinner and as a consequence the level of natural soil was higher, at 0.5m below existing ground level. The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.6m, with a fall to the west. Similar results were found in trenches 3 and 4, which were dug to 0.6 and 0.3m respectively.

Foundation trenches 5 and 6 were up to 2m deep and showed topsoil and subsoil to 0.5-0.7m deep, covering boulder clay. No archaeological features were observed.

6.1 Finds by Joyce Compton

Finds were recovered from three contexts, representing the topsoil over pipe-run to ditch (1), subsoil behind the house (2) and unstratified material over Trenches 5 and 6 context (3). All of the finds have been recorded by count and weight, in grams, by context. Full quantification details can be found in Appendix 1.

The finds from the topsoil comprise three sherds of Victorian or later pottery. Two fragments of slate were recovered from the subsoil, along with a quantity of roof tile fragments. These cannot be dated precisely, but are almost certain to be relatively recent finds. Six sherds of Victorian or later pottery and a nickel silver dessert spoon of relatively recent date were recovered from context 3. None of the material has been retained.

7.0 DISCUSSION

The survey of Roe Green House has revealed a complex pattern of development concentrated in the late 16th and 17th centuries, with subsequent alterations in the 18th century. Most of the more-precise dating was made by Adrian Gibson in his survey notes, which form the basis of the four main phases. However, it is worth noting that his records were incomplete and never written-up, so do not form a comprehensive study.

The house was constructed in the late 16th century as a three-cell building combining a parlour, hall and service rooms, with the same room pattern repeated upstairs. It was probably built as the farmhouse to the farmstead behind, whose aisled barn exhibits similar built characteristics. Interpretation of the early structure is limited to already-exposed areas of timber-framing where sometimes studwork, bracing and other features have been removed. The only complete frames open to observation are on the first floor and the attic, primarily a partition wall between the bedroom and playroom and two attic walls. All others, including the external side walls, retain their plastered finish or else have been boarded-over in recent alterations. In addition, the phase 1 roof contains original rafters, though none were smoke-blackened and indicative of an open hall.

Framing during this period is in well-pegged fairly stout but irregular primary-bracing with slightly-swelling jowls to the wall posts, hidden behind lath and plaster or perhaps timber

cladding on the outside, for which there is some evidence. Some of the joinery appears rather primitive. Ceiling joists bear lambs tongue stops to the ends, which is conducive to a date after 1580 up to the end of the 17th century (Gibson 2007).

There is limited fabric evidence for the early 17th century cross wing, the phase 2 high end, though its extent is clear from the inside. The rear and end walls were removed when the wing was expanded during the 18th century and it is likely the jettied front was remodelled to form a smart entrance porch. Some idea may be gained by the construction of the new low end kitchen range, which shows identical framing to the main part but with less pegging. The large chimney at this end was built with the extension as it is incorporated within the frame. The fire places and chimneys to the cross wing may be 17th century in origin but remodelled in the 18th century.

It would appear the present layout of the house has much to do with later modifications. 18th century work is characterised by lighter but very straight un-braced studwork, while thinner, uneven primary bracing is more likely to date from the early 19th century period. The latter is visible to the main range corridor walls and relates well with the existing doors and more prominent fenestration.

It is easy to forget the relationship of the house to the farm buildings. Certainly the 17th century service range was the 'working end' of the house, but as a farm house as well, space and provision would be made to make cheese, butter, beer and to cut up and store meat. Processing functions were probably confined to the kitchen while the cellar was cool enough to keep foodstuffs. On a cold day, it is likely the farm labourers would have come off the fields to warm up in the kitchen.

Monitoring works during the recent refurbishment phase provided further insights into 17th and 18th century construction methods, but by their very nature had little impact on early fabric. Thus the development of the house is based on the rather limited areas of internally-exposed fabric, without viewing the frame as a whole. No evidence of former buildings associated with or attached to the house or farmstead, or earlier occupation of the possible moated site was observed during the archaeological works and all the finds were of recent date. The flat nature of the front garden and its thin topsoil suggest this has been created relatively recently from former farmland and that any early features have already been ploughed out.

8.0 CONCLUSION

Roe Green House has had a long and complicated development in its 400 year history and the current refurbishment works are part of this trend. The current survey and previous work by Adrian Gibson has led to a clearer understanding of its origins and development, despite the limited amount of historic fabric visible. The house fits well with local and regional trends in construction, design and function. By the second half of the 16th century the fashion for open hall houses with big crown post roofs was declining and first floors and brick chimneys were being inserted. However, the three-bay medieval plan form of hall, parlour and service room was invariably retained, like at Roe Green, with a similar layout on the first floor thus creating more private rooms. During the 17th century properly-floored attics were introduced.

Across East Anglia during the agrarian revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries, farm incomes rose significantly thanks to increased crop yields and the breeding of larger animals, coupled with increased demand from urban markets. This improved the wealth and status of farmers considerably, leading to the expansion and the building of new, larger farmsteads. Roe Green Farm was established during this period, as evidenced by the Grade II-listed farmhouse and aisled barn. The fact that prosperity continued is shown by improvements and modifications to the house up to the 19th century.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Lizzy Rudd for commissioning the works and to Alan Smith of Donald Purkiss Associates for supplying drawings and transcribing Adrian Gibson's field notes. The assistance of the builders, Colin Smalley and his team, and staff at the Herts County Records Office, is also acknowledged. Fieldwork, recording and photography were undertaken by the author. Illustrations were prepared by the author and produced by Andrew Lewsey, while the project was managed by Mark Atkinson and Adrian Scruby. The site was monitored by Andy Instone of HCC CHEU, on behalf of North Hertfordshire LPA.

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Fig.1. Site location and block plan



Fig.2 Extract from 1841 Sandon tithe map (DSA 490/2)

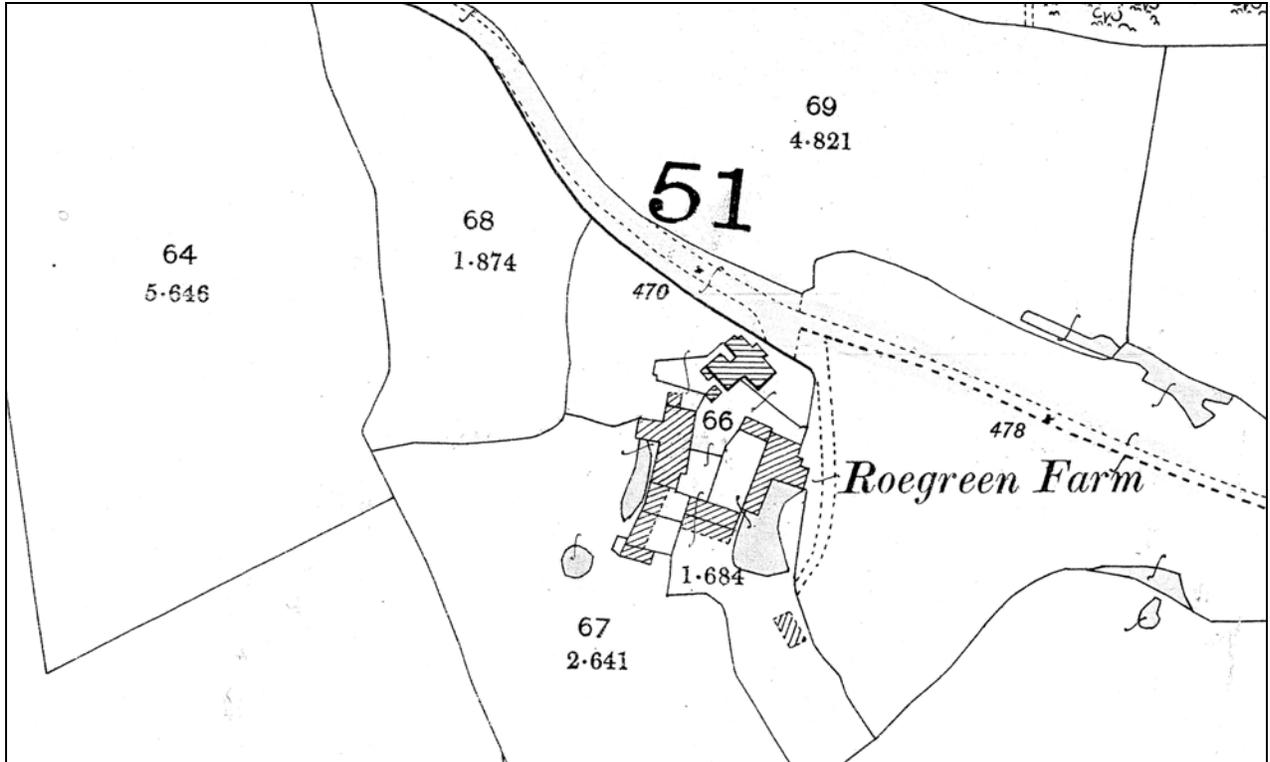


Fig.3 Extract from 1898 25" OS map (sheet 8.6)



Fig.4. Phase plan

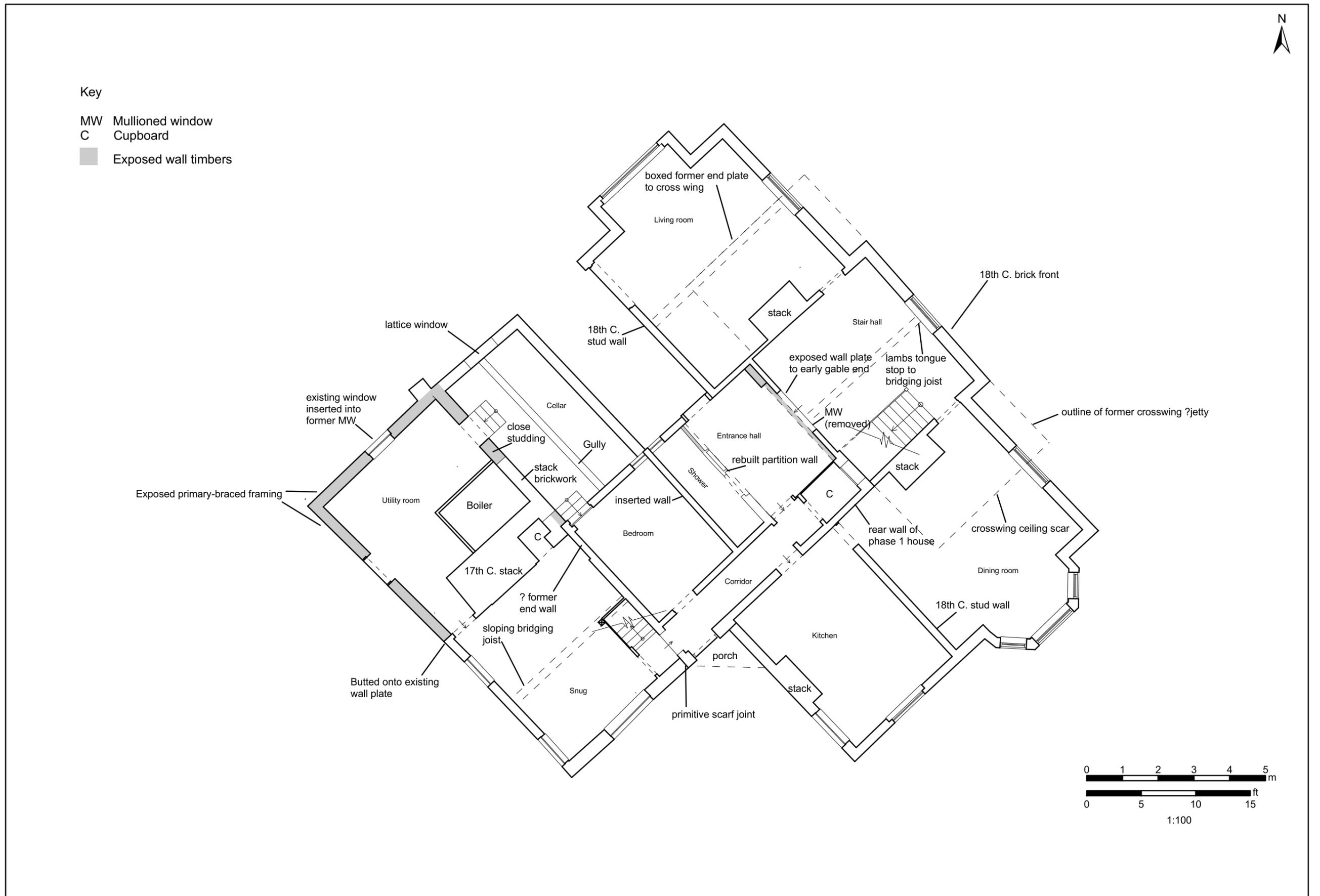


Fig.5. Ground floor plan

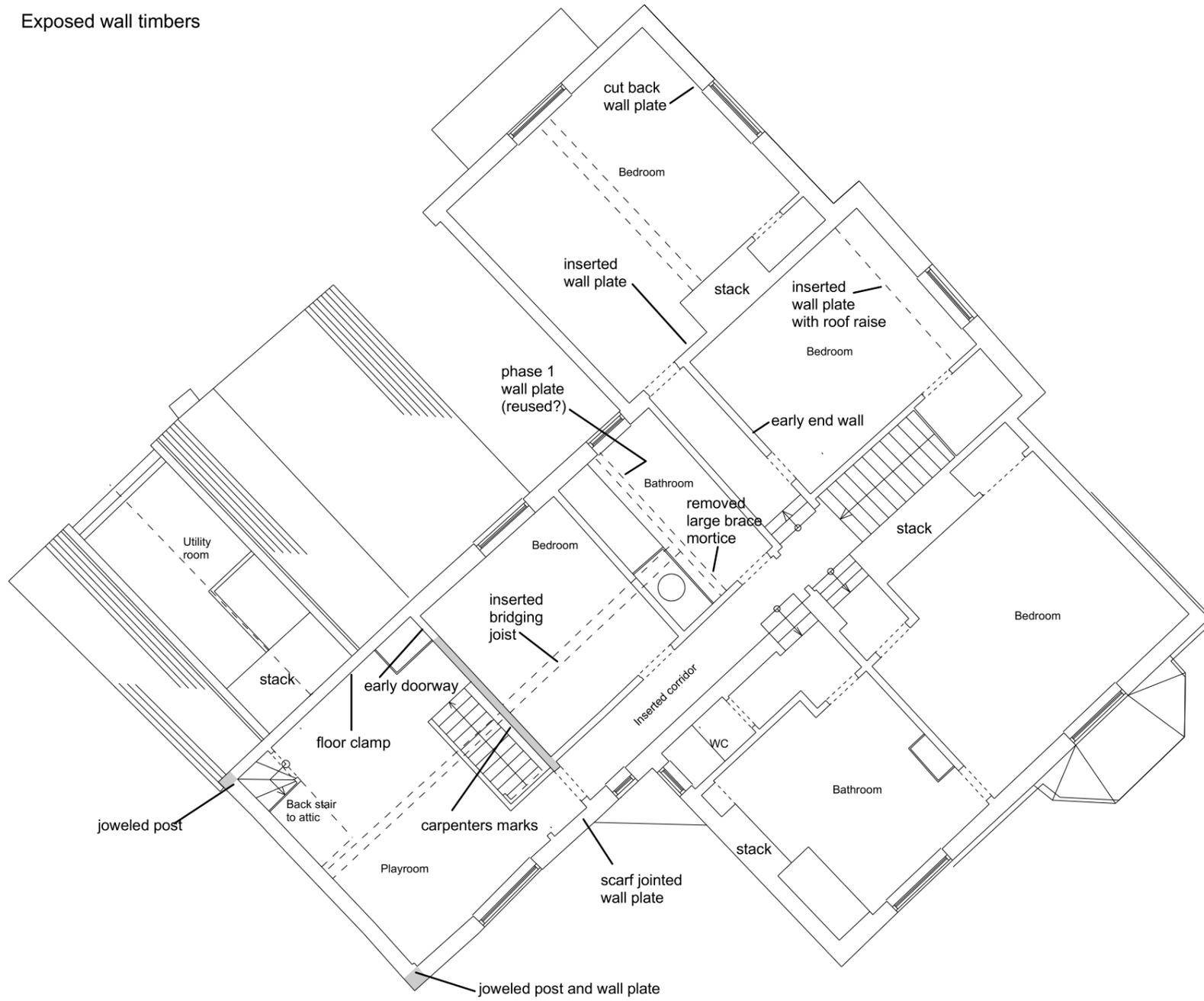
Key

MW Mullioned window
C Cupboard

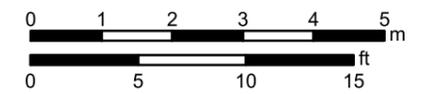
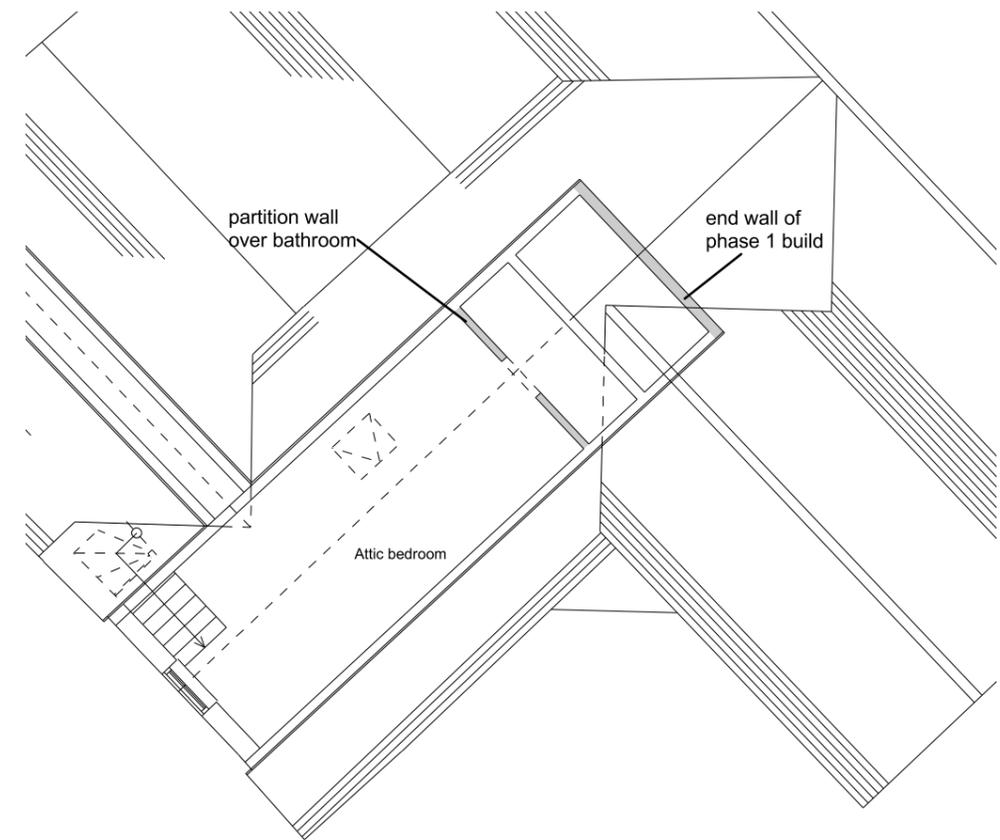
Exposed wall timbers



First floor



Second floor (attic)



1:100

Fig.6 & 7. First and second floor plans

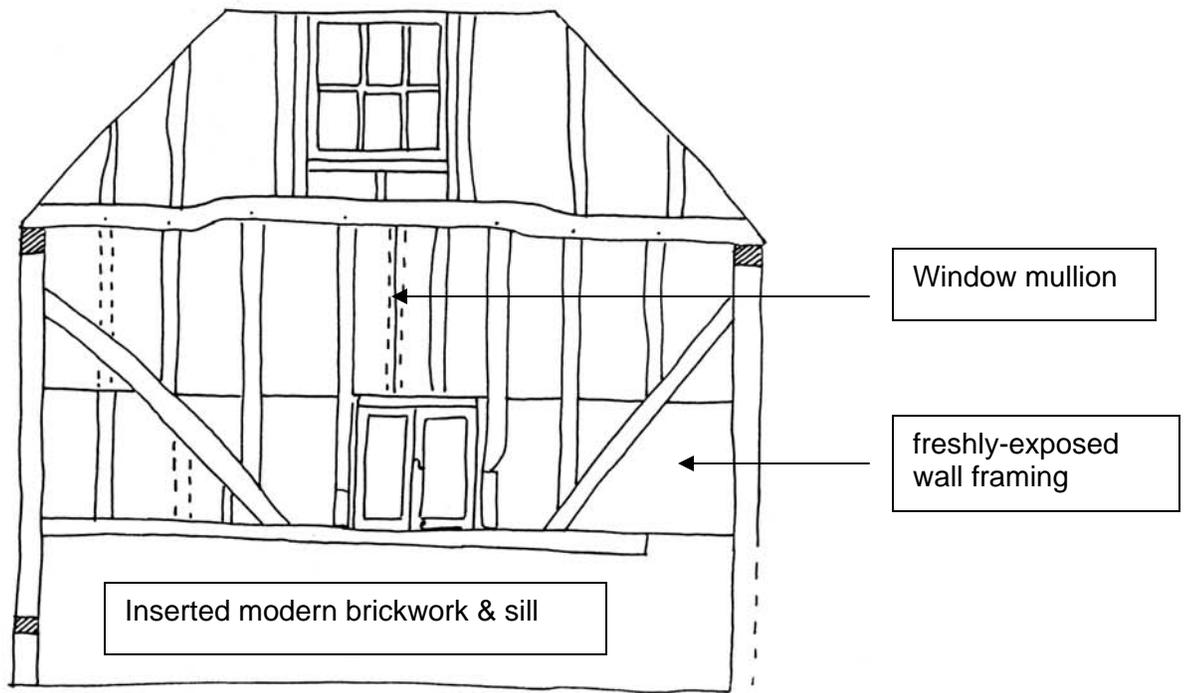


Fig. 8a North-west wall of utility room

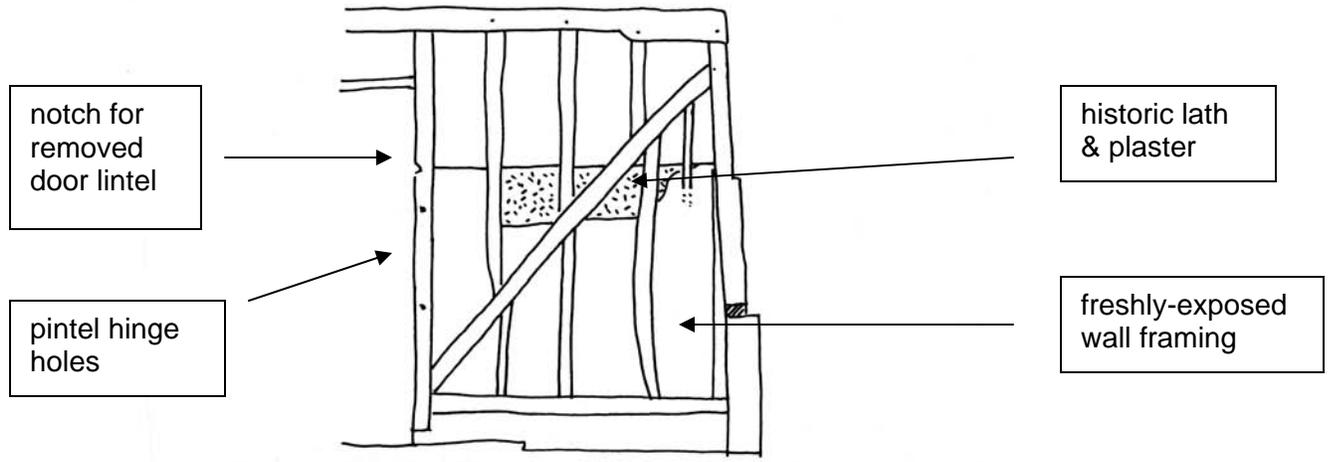


Fig. 8b South-west wall of utility room

Fig. 8 Exposed framing recorded during building works

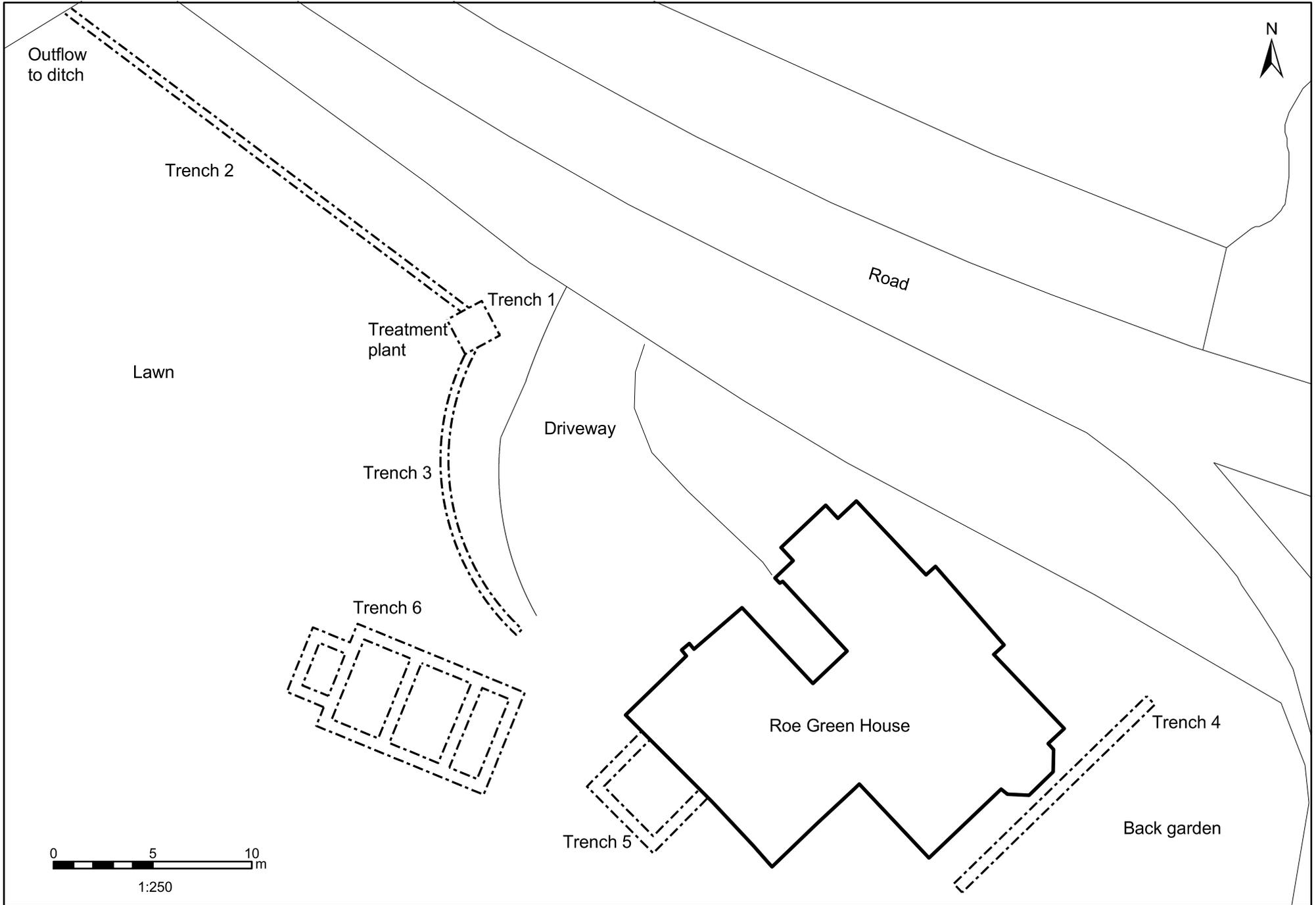


Fig.9. Trenches monitored during watching brief



Plate 1 North-east façade



Plate 2 Driveway elevation (north-west)



Plate 3 Rear elevation (south-west to farmstead)



Plate 4 Garden elevation (south-east)



Plate 5 Midrail to front end of 16th century range, between entrance and stair hall



Plate 6 Mullion sockets in midrail soffit



Plate 7 Gable timbers to early front, viewed in attic



Plate 8 Location of 16th century partition wall



Plate 9 Remains of partition on first floor bathroom (reused timber)



Plate 10 Detail of blocked mullion holes and pegged stud sockets to tie beam soffit



Plate 11 Continuation of partition walling into attic



Plate 12 Bridging joist in snug



Plate 13 Primary-braced framing inside playroom on first floor



Plate 14 Back stair to attic



Plate 15 Stair hall inside central bay of cross wing



Plate 16 Lamb's tongue stop to stair hall bridging joist



Plate 17 18th century timbers in cross wing bedroom



Plate 18 Trapped external boarding inside 17th century kitchen range



Plate 19 Exposed framing in kitchen range (utility room)



Plate 20 Framing to kitchen range gable



Plate 21 18th century cellar attached to kitchen range



Plate 22 Stack wall in cellar exposed in building works



Plate 23 Typical 18th century stud walling between existing kitchen and dining room



Plate 24 Rebuilt roof over cross wing

Appendix 1: Finds table

<i>Context</i>	<i>Feature</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Topsoil	3	14	Pottery; plate sherd, porcelain; body sherds, white earthenware, blue transfer-printed	Modern
2	Subsoil	2 9	100 730	Slate fragments, one with fixing hole Roof tile fragments, some with mortar attached	- Modern
3	u/s	1 6	30 76	White metal dessert spoon, stamped under handle 'ALLWHITE, MADE IN ENGLAND, GUARANTEED STAINLESS, CHROME-PLATED NICKEL SILVER' in diamond-shaped arrangement Pottery; rim and body sherds, white earthenware with blue-transfer-printing	Modern Modern

Appendix 2: Contents of Archive

Site name: Roe Green House, Roe Green, Sandon, Hertfordshire

Project no. 1788

Index to the Archive

Document wallet containing:

1. Introduction

- 1.1 HCC HEU design brief
- 1.2 FAU written scheme of investigation
- 1.3 Client/archive report
- 1.4 Unbound version of report
- 1.5 CD containing copy of report, pdf-formatted, & digital photographs

2. Site Archive

- 2.1 Photographic register & record (digital images & prints, colour 120mm & monochrome 35mm prints)
- 2.2 Site notes & annotated survey drawings
- 2.3 Adrian Gibson's report, 2007
- 2.4 Hard copies of architects plans

Appendix 2: Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record sheet

Site name and address: Roe Green House, Roe Green, Sandon.		
County: Hertfordshire	District: North Herts	
Village/Town: Sandon	Parish: Sandon	
Planning application reference: 1/07/0220 & 0227		
Client name & address.: Mrs Lizzy Rudd, Roe Green House		
Nature of application: Refurbishment of 16th century house, new build & services		
Present land use: House & garden		
Size of application area: 1,200m	Size of area investigated: WB	
NGR (to 8 figures): TL 3095 3389		
Site code: RGFS 07		
Site director/organization: Andrew Letch / Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit		
Type of work: Building recording & archaeological monitoring		
Date of work:	Start: June 2007	Finish: April 2008
LBS Nos. 162404 (house): 162409 (barn)		
Related SMR Nos.: AAS No. 198	Periods represented: 16th century to modern	
Relevant previous summaries/reports None		
Summary of fieldwork results:		
<p>Roe Green House is a Grade II-listed former farmhouse to Roe Green farm, but now separately-owned. The house was constructed in the late 16th century as a primary-braced timber-framed three-celled structure with a cross wing added in the early 17th century forming a T-shape design and creating a new 'high end'. A kitchen range was added, most likely at the same time, while a cellar/dairy was built in the 18th century along with modifications to the cross wing.</p> <p>The survey recorded existing historic fabric and areas newly exposed in the course of refurbishment works. However much of the framing remains covered under modern and historic wall treatments and the survey is therefore based primarily upon the readily-accessible areas. The work followed an uncompleted appraisal of the house by Adrian Gibson, who passed away before his notes were written up.</p> <p>The original three-celled house replicates the earlier hall house form, but with a first floor, and is an established type. Although much of the early range survives, the later cross wing was severely altered in the late 18th century. Primary dating features include jowled posts, lambs tongue stops, primary bracing and diamond mullion windows. Based on what was seen, the studwork is quite stout but primitive and so is the joinery, perhaps befitting a farmer of moderate income. The farm to the south, also currently undergoing redevelopment, features a Grade II listed aisled barn that is likely to be contemporary with the early phases of the house but superior in build.</p> <p>Service and foundation trenches in the garden found no features or finds of archaeological interest</p>		
Author of summary: Andrew Letch (ECC FAU)	Date of summary: 1st December 2008	