

Ambrey Archaeology Ltd

Archaeological Building Recording (Level 1) of Mousehall Farm Cottage, Clent, Worcestershire WSM 80820

Version 2

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Summary

A historic building recording exercise was carried out at Mousehall Farm Cottage, Bromsgrove Road, Clent, Stourbridge, Worcestershire (SO 92534 78671) as a condition of planning permission from Bromsgrove District Council for a proposed porch to the front elevation and a two storey and single storey rear extension. A condition of the planning permission was that a historic building record of the building, Level 1, be carried out. The building was recorded in June 2024.

The recorded buildings are located in a former farmyard in the hamlet of Holy Cross, approximately 2km to the south-east of West Hagley.

The farmyard is described on the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record as a partially extant possible 19th century unlisted farmstead with converted buildings, of regular courtyard L plan with additional detached elements to the main plan. The farmhouse is detached with a gable to the yard. Evidence from 19th century maps suggests that the farmhouse and buildings were probably built at some time between 1814 and 1838.

The plan, depicted on the tithe map of 1838 (and called 'Mouses Hole' on the apportionment), indicates a simple L-shaped plan of outbuildings, most likely Buildings 1 and 4, with Buildings 2 and 3 being later additions. The double doorways in the buildings suggest that they may have been built as carhouses but it is also possible that some of the doorways may have been later insertions.

Other outhouses added to the farmstead by 1883 are no longer standing. The barns were converted to residential accommodation early in the 21st century when a brick extension occupying the footprint of former pigstyes was also constructed. The full height doorways for the former threshing doors of the main barn remain as does the barn's decorative gable. Some of the original internal roof timbers survive, despite significant alteration to the interior.

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1. Background

A historic building recording exercise was carried out at Mousehall Farm Cottage, Bromsgrove Road, Clent, Stourbridge, Worcestershire (SO 92534 78671).

The project was commissioned by Jonathan and Lorraine Hill as a condition of planning permission granted by Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) for a proposed porch to the front elevation and a two storey and single storey rear extension at the property (PI ref. 21/00545/FUL; Fig 1).

Condition 5 of the planning permission states that *The development shall not be commenced until a Level 1 Historic Building Recording (as defined by Historic England) has been completed in accordance with the guidelines laid out in the Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Projects in Worcestershire and submitted to the County Historic Environment Record.*

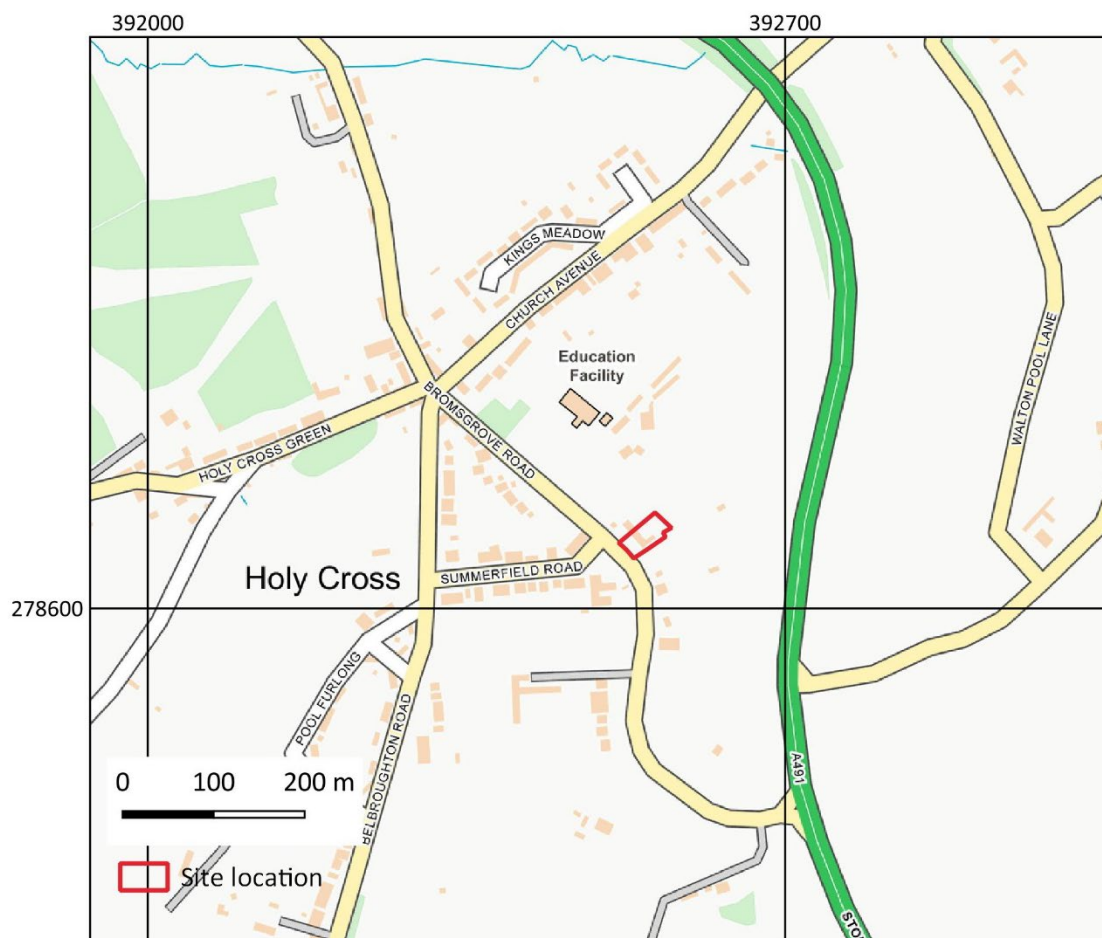


Figure 1: Site location

(©[2024] Ordnance Survey open data)

2. Aims

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists defines the aims of building recording as 'a programme of work intended to establish the character, history, dating, form and archaeological development of a specified building' (CIfA 2014, updated 2019).

Historic England's guidance for building recording describes Level 1 as essentially a basic visual record, supplemented by the minimum of information needed to identify the building's location, age and type (HE 2016, 26).

3. Methods

The building recording was carried out by Elizabeth Connolly MA ACIfA.

An event number for the project was provided by Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (reference WSM80820).

The field survey was undertaken on 6th June 2024. Building recording consisted of a photographic survey of the interior and exterior of the building.

All photographs were taken with photographic scales visible in each shot where possible. The photographic survey was carried out with a Nikon D3200 digital SLR camera. Aerial images were obtained using a DJI Mavic Mini 2 UAV. Photo locations are presented in Figure 4. Existing ground plans and elevations (provided by the client) are presented in the Appendix.

Provision has been made to upload the digital archive of the project via OASIS (OASIS Id: ambreyar2-526016). The project conforms to the specification for a Level 1 survey as defined by Historic England (HE 2016).

4. Context

4.1 Site location

The recorded buildings are located in a former farmyard in the hamlet of Holy Cross, approximately 2km to the south-east of West Hagley. The building is located to the north east of the Bromsgrove Road, in an agricultural landscape, with the Clent Hills rising about 1km to the north-east.

Bedrock at the site is mapped as sandstone of the Helsby Formation (BGS 2024).

4.2 Historic Context

The former farmyard of Mousehall Farm (WSM62687) is described on the Worcestershire HER as a partially extant possible 19th century unlisted farmstead with converted buildings. The farmstead is of regular courtyard L plan with additional detached elements to the main plan. The farmhouse (WSM55037) is detached with a gable to the yard. There has been a partial loss (less than 50%) of traditional buildings.



Figure 2: Extract of 1838 tithe map of the parish of Clent

The building is depicted on the 1838 tithe map of the Parish of Clent (Fig. 2) as plot nos 141 and 142 'Mouses Hole'; 'House garden & Farm Buildings,' but it is not clear who owned and occupied the farm.

The farm buildings are shown as an L-shaped range separated from the farmhouse to the north-west by a track.

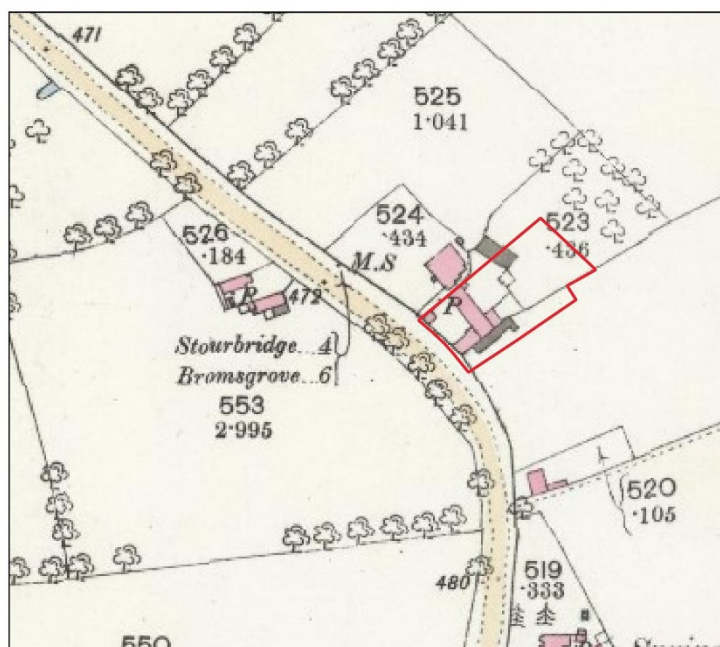


Figure 3: Extract of 1883 Ordnance Survey map of Worcestershire, scale 1:2500

By the 1883 Ordnance Survey (Fig 3) buildings are depicted as one oriented north-west by south-east with a sub rectangular building abutting to the south-west, oriented north-east by south-west. A small building is depicted abutting the larger building to the north and a long rectangular building has been added to the south east of the range.

5. The building

The buildings surveyed comprise brick-built former barns with tiled gable roofs, located immediately to the south-east of Mousehall Farm (Plate 1). The buildings were much altered during a phase of restoration around 2000-2005.

The buildings are constructed of brick in stretcher bond with gable roofs of modern tiles. The windows throughout are of uPVC unless stated otherwise.

The main range (Plate 2), which is oriented north-west by south-east, comprises a three bay threshing barn Building 1, abutting a probable former cart shed or carriage house (Building 2). This range is abutted by two buildings; later extensions, both of which, as well as the largest barn itself, are shown on 19th century mapping.

At the south-eastern end of Building 1, Building 3 is square in plan and lower in height than the main range. It extends to the north-east and is not quite perpendicular to the main building. (see Fig 3).

Extending to the south-west a further brick building; Building 4; abuts Building 1. This is lower in height than the building to the north-west and may have also served the function of a cart shed.

Building 5 is an extension built around 2005, extending to the north-east of Building 3. This was constructed on the site of former pigsties (Jon Hill pers. comm.). As it is entirely of modern construction it is not described below.

Building 1

Building 1 is a three-bay former barn with two opposing full-height openings for threshing doors in the central bay (Plate 3). On the front elevation there is a decorative dog tooth brick course below the eaves (Plate 4), interrupted above the threshing door opening with a lintel probably inserted at the same time as the uPVC windows.

The former threshing door openings (Plates 5 and 6) are set into recessed brickwork with decorative ashlar blocks set into the jambs at intervals (Plates 7 and 8). The openings are fully glazed with French doors in the glazing in both elevations.

There is a door and window, both with segmental brick arches on the ground floor level in the front elevation with two casement windows over this in first floor level (Plate 9).

On the rear elevation a small lean-to extension with a shed roof contains two top-opening casement windows with wooden frames, both with upright bricks beneath their sills (Plates 10 and 11).

The gable (Plate 12) is built in stretcher bond with decorative dark blue brick stubs arranged regularly every sixth course below the apex from twelve courses down. At mid-level in the gable, there are gaps in this decorative brickwork suggesting that these areas had been repaired.

Two blue bricks protrude from a small, bricked-up rectangular aperture in the apex— probably a former owl hole.

A four- light uPVC window is located centrally within the ground floor of the gable, beneath a substantial lintel of reused timber (Plate 13). There is a long, two light casement window located at first floor level.

Building 2

This building is constructed of bricks of a different hue to those in Building 1 and the brickwork in both buildings is not tied in (Plate 14 and see Plate 9). Dog tooth brickwork continues beneath the eaves in this building. On the front and rear elevations, double-doorways filled with four light windows beneath segmental arches are located on the ground floor with casement windows located centrally above this. The window on the first floor is located directly beneath the course of decorative brickwork on the front elevation and that on the rear elevation is directly beneath the lowest protruding brick course. Below the window sills on each elevation there is a row of vertical bricks.

Building 3

This is a single bay extension to Building 1 to the north-east. A brick wall which is likely to be the original external wall of this building forms the north-eastern wall of the current kitchen (Plates 15 and 16). There is a single light window with a segmental arch and timber surround at first floor level in this wall.

The building has a single light window with a timber lintel in the south-east elevation and a window each on the ground and first floor in the north-west elevation, both off centre. A large timber lintel in the north-west elevation may be a bonded timber or indicate a former opening. Similarly a less substantial timber just beneath this may represent a blocked opening or be a bonded timber (Plate 17).

Building 4

This building displays significant rebuilding or refurbishment with a distinct variation in the brick hues of different phases in the south-east elevation (see Plate 12). This elevation is mostly devoid of architectural elements apart from a pair of ashlar blocks at the base by the gas mains (Plate 18). There is brick dentilling below the eaves on the south-east and north-west elevations and the southern corner of the building is of curved brickwork (Plate 19).

A substantial curved timber lintel beneath a segmental arch in the south-western bay indicates a former double doorway, now filled with a door and window (Plate 20). Two further doorways to the north of this have segmental arches and a small lean-to extension with a shed roof contains a single casement window. On the first floor, a casement window directly beneath the brickwork below the eaves has no arch or differential brickwork beneath the sill. There is a single window in the first floor in the south-west gable. There is a blocked owl hole in the apex.

Interior

The buildings were substantially renovated to create residential accommodation with few original features remaining internally. The accommodation comprises two units; Buildings 1, 2, 3 and 5 are occupied by the clients and Building 4 is currently Air BnB accommodation, the interior of which was not visited during the survey.

Roof trusses

The trusses comprise substantial tie beams with principal rafters supporting trenched purlins morticed into a straining piece supporting upper purlins (Plate 21). The principal rafters are propped with insubstantial queen posts. The truss to the south-west is infilled with brick (Plate 22). Several of

the original timbers are elm and show evidence of having had beetle infestation. Many timbers have therefore been replaced or strengthened with modern machined timbers.

In Bedroom 1, some timbers have been left exposed and there is evidence of an internal bonded timber in the wall on either side of the window (Plate 23). Some of the roof timbers in the area of the junction of Buildings 1 and 3 survive in this area (Plates 24 and 25).



Figure 4. Plan of Buildings with photo locations marked. (Photos taken on First Floor level numbered in blue)

6. Discussion

Mousehall Farmhouse and buildings were probably built at some time between 1814 and 1838. The plan, as depicted on the tithe map of 1838, indicates a simple L-shaped plan of outbuildings, most likely Buildings 1 and 4, with Buildings 2 and 3 being later additions. The double doorways in the buildings suggest that they may have been built as carhouses but it is also possible that some of the doorways may have been later insertions. Other outhouses added to the farmstead by 1883 (to the north of the yard and immediately to the south-east of the extant range) are no longer standing.

7. Acknowledgements

Ambrey Archaeology would like to thank Jon Hill for commissioning the project and Emily Hathaway, Historic Environment Advisor to Worcestershire County Council.

8. Sources Consulted

8.1 Cartographic sources

1814 OSD 219, Stourbridge and Dudley, draughtsman Henry Stevens (not depicted)

1838 Tithe map of the Parish of Clent

1883 Ordnance Survey of Worcestershire IX.11, scale 1:2500

1903 Ordnance Survey of Worcestershire IX.11, scale 1:2500

8.2 Bibliography

Alcock, NW, Barley, MW, Dixon, PW, & Meeson, RA, 1996, *Recording Timber-Framed Buildings: An Illustrated Glossary*, Practical Handbook in Archaeology 5

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CIfA, 2019, *Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures*

Historic England 2016, *Understanding historic buildings: a guide to good recording practice*

Lake, J., 1989, *Historic Farm Buildings*, Blandford Press

WCC 2019, Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Projects in Worcestershire, available at

https://www.explorethepast.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Worcs_Standards_Guidance_2019_V1.pdf

Plates



Plate 1. Low level aerial view west of the former farmstead



Plate 2. Low level aerial view south of the former farmstead



Plate 3. Low level aerial view south-west of the former farmstead



Plate 4. View north-east towards threshing doorway in Building 1



Plate 5. Low level view west of former farmyard



Plate 6. Threshing doors on the front elevation in Building 1



Plate 7. Detail of stone work in doorjamb in rear of Building 1



Plate 8. View south of doorjamb in rear of Building 1



Plate 9. Front elevation of Buildings 1 and 2



Plate 10. Rear elevation of Buildings 1 and 2



Plate 11. Lean-to to rear of Building 1



Plate 12. View north-east along track to south-east of buildings, with the Gable of Building 1 in centre of photograph



Plate 13. Ground floor window in south-east gable of Building 1



Plate 14. View west of Building 2

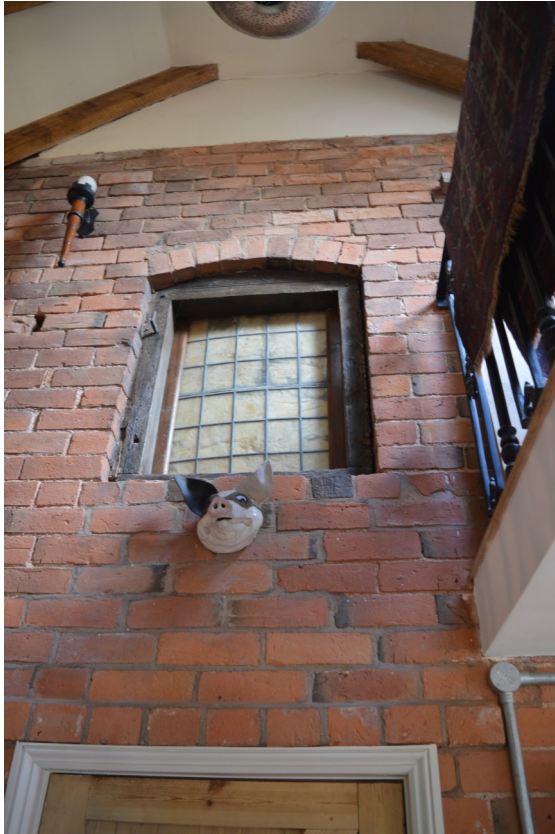


Plate 15. View south-west of former external wall of Building 3

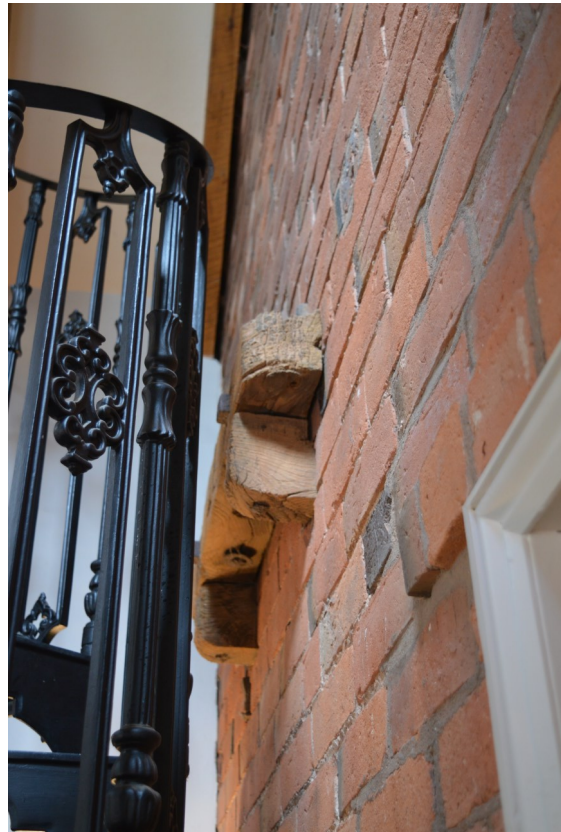


Plate 16. Wall fitting associated with former farmyard on the former external wall of Building 3



Plate 17. Oblique view of north-west elevation of Building 3



Plate 18. Reused ashlar blocks in Building 4, view north-west



Plate 19. Oblique view of south-west gable, Building 4



Plate 20. South-east elevation of Building 4



Plate 21. Roof truss, view north-west



Plate 22. Roof truss, infilled with brick, view south-east



Plate 23. View south-east in bedroom, first floor, Building 1

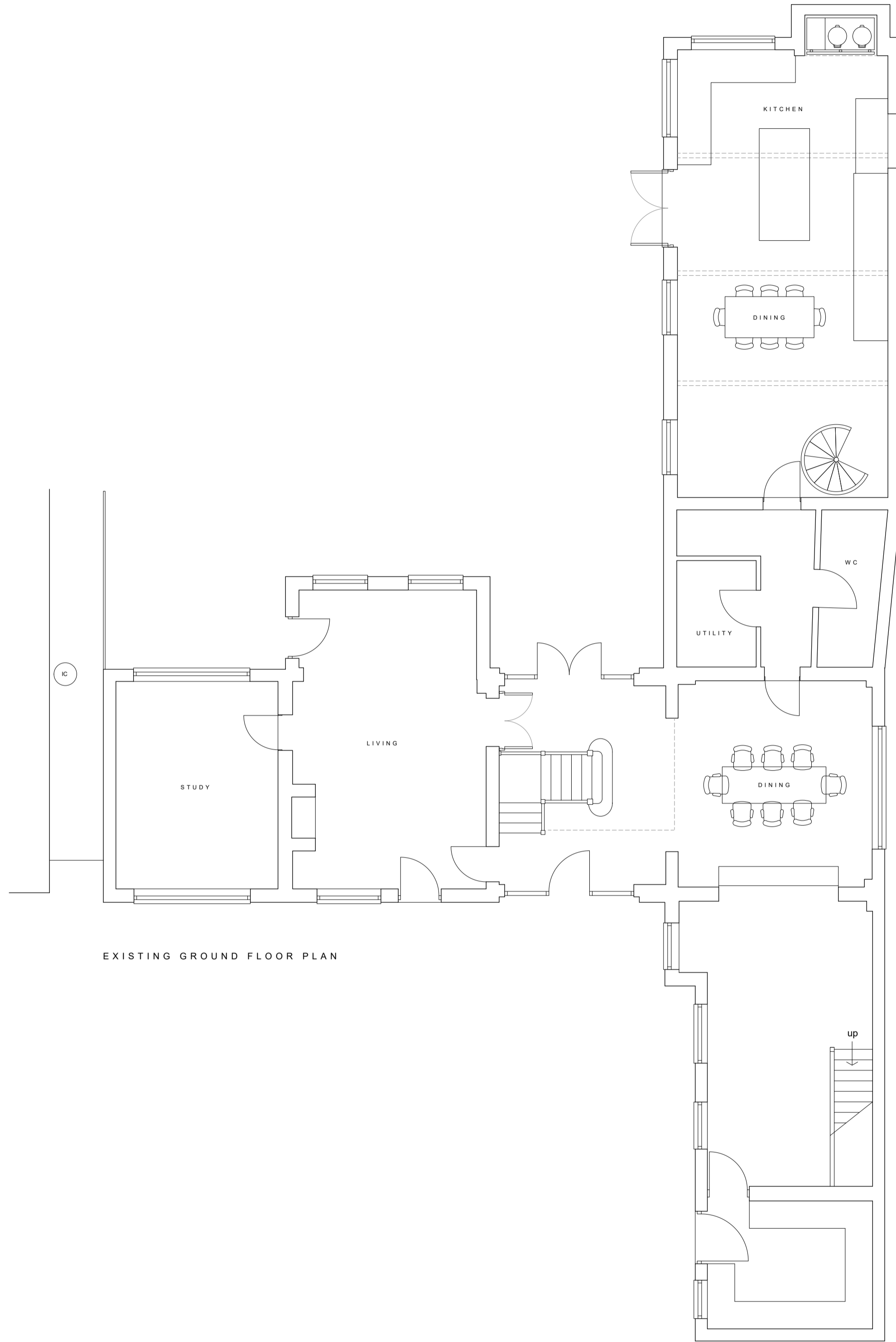


Plate 24. View north-east in bedroom, first floor, Building 1



Plate 25. Exposed timbers in landing

Appendix – Plans of Mousehall Farm Cottage



EXISTING GROUND FLOOR PLAN

1:75
@A2 0 1m 2m 3m 4m 5m

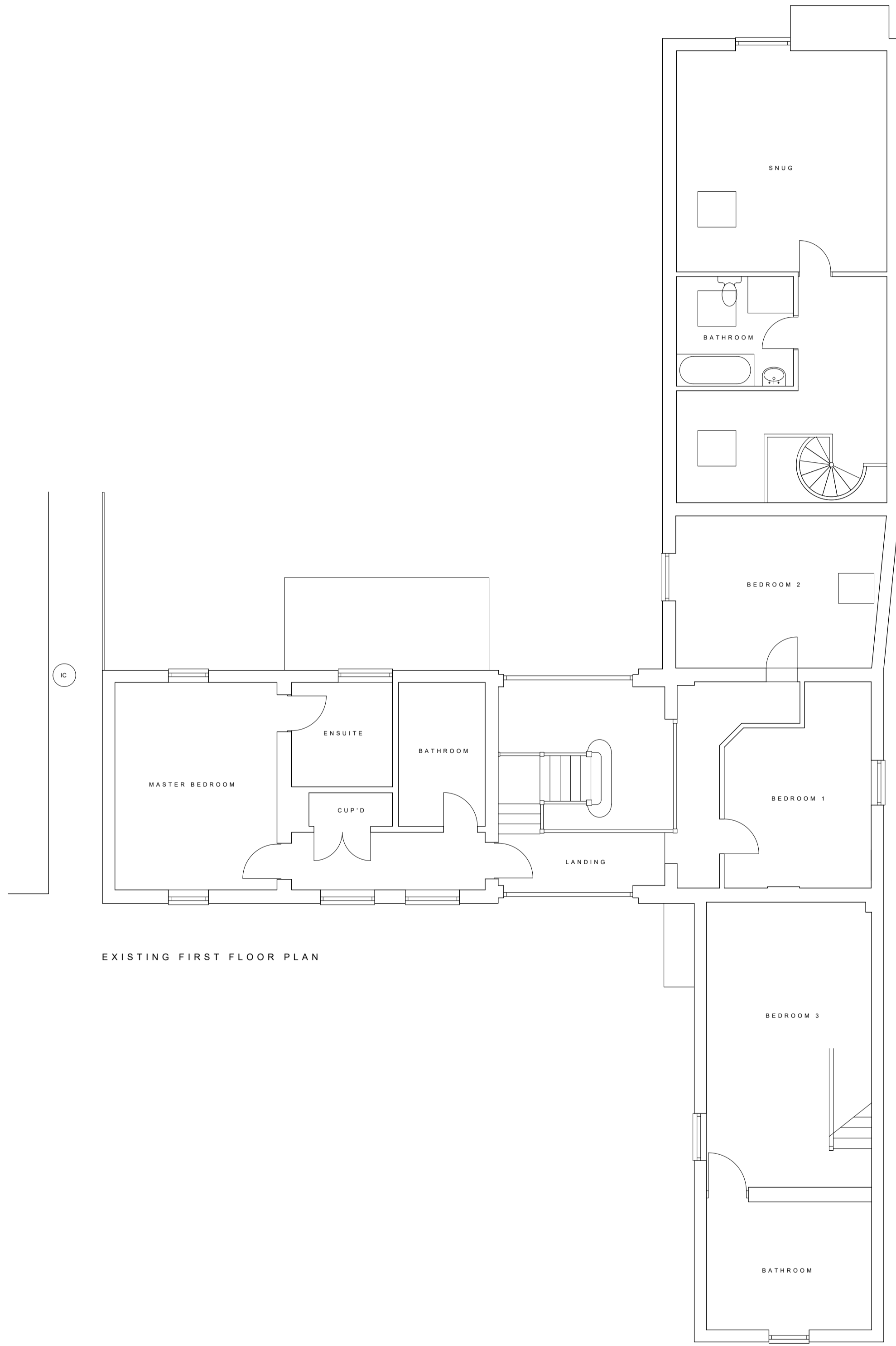


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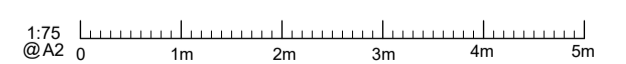
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PROJECT Mousehall Cottage
 PROJECT NO* 210217
 TITLE Existing Ground Floor Plan
 CLIENT Jon & Lorraine Hill
 DATE 22.03.21

DRAWING NO* E01
 REVISION _____
 SCALE 1:75@A2



EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN



M : 07779 091331
E : DAN@ASPECTDESIGNSTUDIO.CO.UK
W : WWW.ASPECTDESIGNSTUDIO.CO.UK
A : CRABTREE STABLES, CRABTREE FARM, DORSINGTON ROAD, PEBWORTH, CV37 8AP

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PROJECT Mousehall Cottage
PROJECT NO* 210217
TITLE Existing First Floor Plan
CLIENT Jon & Lorraine Hill
DATE 22.03.21

DRAWING NO* E02
REVISION _____
SCALE 1:75@A2



EXISTING SOUTH WEST ELEVATION



EXISTING NORTH WEST ELEVATION

1:75
@A2 0 1m 2m 3m 4m 5m



M : 07779 091331
 E : DAN@ASPECTDESIGNSTUDIO.CO.UK
 W : WWW.ASPECTDESIGNSTUDIO.CO.UK
 A : CRABTREE STABLES, CRABTREE FARM, DORSINGTON ROAD, PEBWORTH, CV37 8AP

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PROJECT Mousehall Cottage
 PROJECT NO* 210217
 TITLE Existing SW & NW Elevations
 CLIENT Jon & Lorraine Hill
 DATE 22.03.21

DRAWING NO* E03
 REVISION _____
 SCALE 1:75@A2

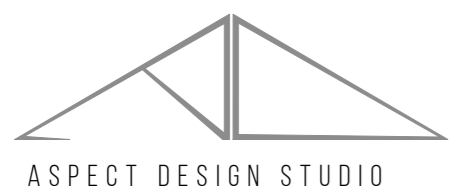


EXISTING NORTH EAST ELEVATION



EXISTING SOUTH EAST ELEVATION

1:75
@A2 0 1m 2m 3m 4m 5m



M : 07779 091331
 E : DAN@ASPECTDESIGNSTUDIO.CO.UK
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PROJECT Mousehall Cottage
 PROJECT NO* 210217
 TITLE Existing SE & NE Elevations
 CLIENT Jon & Lorraine Hill
 DATE 22.03.21

DRAWING NO* E04
 REVISION _____
 SCALE 1:75@A2