

1 BEECHTREE COTTAGES, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD  
ROAD, LEVER STOCK GREEN, HERTFORDSHIRE

HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING AND  
MONITORING & RECORDING

|                          |                                                                                                                         |                      |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
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| Signed:                  |                                                                                                                         | Date: 9 October 2013 |

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| Project name                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 1 Beechtree Cottages, Hemel Hempstead Road, Lever Stock Green, Hertfordshire                                                           |                     |             |
| <p><i>Summary</i></p> <p><i>In August and September 2013 AS Ltd. carried out historic building recording with monitoring and recording at 1 Beechtree Cottages, Hemel Hempstead Road, Lever Stock Green, Hertfordshire. This survey followed earlier consultation to determine the original form of the south gable end of the rear wing and was carried out in order to fulfil a condition of listed building consent for repair and alteration. The recording comprised making a detailed record of the south gable and a section of the west elevation prior to and during planned works. Technical analysis carried out prior to and during the planned works allows the appearance of the south gable end to be reconstructed with some certainty. The original form is characterised by trusses consisting of jowled posts with slightly cambered tie-beams with a queen post clasped side-purlin roof over. The timber-framing otherwise comprised fairly widely-spaced studs with infill panels of wattle and daub, most of which have been lost though one or two wattle staves and a small section of daub survived on the west. An original mullion window also survives in good condition, exposed during the planned works, and it is likely that a similar window lay on the east.</i></p> <p><i>An estate map depicts a building here by at least 1768, but evidence suggests the rear wing was constructed in the 17th century or earlier, although the junction with the main range is not coherent and further investigation is needed to ascertain the phasing of the building as a whole. The original window was made redundant with the construction of the kitchen lean-to which is itself of some age, while the early 19th century saw upgrading of the whole house.</i></p> |                                                                                                                                        |                     |             |
| Project dates (fieldwork)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 20 <sup>th</sup> June, 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 27 <sup>th</sup> August, 4 <sup>th</sup> and 16 <sup>th</sup> September 2013                 |                     |             |
| Previous work (Y/N/?)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Y                                                                                                                                      | Future work (Y/N/?) | -           |
| P. number                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 5375                                                                                                                                   | Site code           | AS1625      |
| Type of project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Historic building recording                                                                                                            |                     |             |
| Site status                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Grade II listed                                                                                                                        |                     |             |
| Current land use                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Domestic house                                                                                                                         |                     |             |
| Planned development                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Repair to the south gable of the rear cross-wing                                                                                       |                     |             |
| Main features (+dates)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 17 <sup>th</sup> century or earlier with later alterations                                                                             |                     |             |
| Significant finds (+dates)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | -                                                                                                                                      |                     |             |
| <b>Project location</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                        |                     |             |
| County/ District/ Parish                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Hertfordshire                                                                                                                          | St Albans           | St. Michael |
| HER for area                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | n/a                                                                                                                                    |                     |             |
| Post code (if known)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | HP3 8LA                                                                                                                                |                     |             |
| Area of site                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | -                                                                                                                                      |                     |             |
| NGR                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | TL 1023 0597                                                                                                                           |                     |             |
| Height AOD (max)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | c. 130m AOD                                                                                                                            |                     |             |
| <b>Project creators</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                        |                     |             |
| Brief issued by                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | -                                                                                                                                      |                     |             |
| Project supervisor/s (PO)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Tansy Collins                                                                                                                          |                     |             |
| Funded by                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Point Builders Ltd.                                                                                                                    |                     |             |
| Full title                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 1 Beechtree Cottages, Hemel Hempstead Road, Lever Stock Green, Hertfordshire. Historic Building Recording and Monitoring and Recording |                     |             |
| Authors                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Collins, T.                                                                                                                            |                     |             |
| Report no.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 4428                                                                                                                                   |                     |             |
| Date (of report)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | October 2013                                                                                                                           |                     |             |



# 1 BEECHTREE COTTAGES, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD ROAD, LEVER STOCK GREEN, HERTFORDSHIRE

## HISTORIC BUILDING BUILDING RECORDING AND MONITORING AND RECORDING

### **SUMMARY**

*In August and September 2013 AS Ltd. carried out historic building recording with monitoring and recording at 1 Beechtree Cottages, Hemel Hempstead Road, Lever Stock Green, Hertfordshire. This survey followed earlier consultation to determine the original form of the south gable end of the rear wing and was carried out in order to fulfil a condition of listed building consent for repair and alteration. The recording comprised making a detailed record of the south gable and a section of the west elevation prior to and during planned works.*

*Technical analysis carried out prior to and during the planned works allows the appearance of the south gable end to be reconstructed with some certainty. The original form is characterised by trusses consisting of jowled posts with slightly cambered tie-beams with a queen post clasped side-purlin roof over. The timber-framing otherwise comprised fairly widely-spaced studs with infill panels of wattle and daub, most of which have been lost though one or two wattle staves and a small section of daub survived on the west. An original mullion window also survives in good condition, exposed during the planned works, and it is likely that a similar window lay on the east.*

*An estate map depicts a building here by at least 1768, but evidence suggests the rear wing was constructed in the 17<sup>th</sup> century or earlier, although the junction with the main range is not coherent and further investigation is needed to ascertain the phasing of the building as a whole. The original window was made redundant with the construction of the kitchen lean-to which is itself of some age, while the early 19<sup>th</sup> century saw upgrading of the whole house.*

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In August and September 2013 Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) carried out historic building recording with monitoring and recording at 1 Beechtree Cottages, Hemel Hempstead Road, Lever Stock Green, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 1023 0597; Fig. 1). This followed earlier consultation to determine the original form of the south gable end of the rear wing (AS report No. 4345) and was carried out in order to fulfil a condition of listed building consent for repair and alteration (St Albans Ref. 5/2013/1391 & 0577). The recording included producing a detailed record of the south gable and a section of the west elevation prior to and during repair and rebuilding works. It was carried out according to a specification (Written Scheme of Investigation) produced by AS (dated 20<sup>th</sup> August 2013) in response to a request by St Albans City & District Council District Archaeologist (SADC) (Simon West).

1.2 The historic building recording followed the procedures outlined in the English Heritage document *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practise* (2006) and also conformed to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (revised 2008).

1.3 The recording was limited to those areas of the building which were subject to repair and rebuilding. This included the south gable end of the rear wing as well as a section of the west elevation at upper level. The main element of the work was to produce a high-quality archive suitable for long-term deposition in order to preserve by record the area of the building subject to alteration. Monitoring and recording was carried out during the removal of external fabric to provide additional information to augment the existing record. Additional research was carried out to place the findings of the recording in context.

### *Planning policy*

1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012) states that those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are heritage assets. The NPPF aims to deliver sustainable development by ensuring that policies and decisions that concern the historic environment recognise that heritage assets are a non-renewable resource, take account of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of heritage conservation, and recognise that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. The NPPF requires applications to describe the significance of any heritage asset, including its setting that may be affected in proportion to the asset's importance and the potential impact of the proposal.

1.5 The NPPF aims to conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, with substantial harm to designated heritage assets (i.e. listed buildings, scheduled monuments) only permitted in exceptional circumstances when the public benefit of a proposal outweighs the conservation of the asset. The effect of proposals on non-designated heritage assets must be balanced against the scale of loss and significance of the asset, but non-designated heritage assets of demonstrably equivalent significance may be considered subject to the same policies as those that are designated. The NPPF states that opportunities to capture evidence from the historic environment, to record and advance the understanding of heritage assets and to make this publicly available is a requirement of development management. This opportunity should be taken in a manner proportionate to the significance of a heritage asset and to impact of the proposal, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

## **2 METHODOLOGY**

2.1 Information was sort from a variety of available sources in order to provide a brief history of the building and to provide context for the physical survey.

2.2 The principal source for historical and cartographic sources was the Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (Hertford), while all secondary sources consulted are referenced appropriately in the bibliography.

## *The building*

2.3 The site was visited by Tansy Collins and Lisa Smith on a number of occasions between the 20<sup>th</sup> June and the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2013 prior to and during the planned works in order to compile descriptions of the rear gable and undertake the drawing and photographic work. Tansy Collins compiled the written descriptions and undertook the drawing and photographic work. The south elevation of the rear wing was drawn, following the removal of modern Flettons, as well as a section of the west elevation of the rear wing after lath and plasterwork was removed. These have been included on Figs. 13.

2.4 Tansy Collins carried out the photographic survey. This was conducted using a Canon 60D (18 megapixels) digital single lens reflex camera and included all external views and internal views relevant to the project. The photographic record was augmented using medium format (4.5cm x 6cm) black and white film utilising a Zenza Bronica ETRS camera and Ilford HP5 IOS 400 120mm film. External lighting and weather conditions were good at the time of the survey. A scale was used wherever possible, and a flash was employed for internal shots. A pictorial index of the digital photography and selected colour plates are included below together with location plots (Figs. 10-12).

2.5 Information on the proposed reconstruction of the south gable end of the rear wing as well as the flanking elevation at upper level was provided by the client. This information has been included on Fig. 14.

## **3 THE SITE (Fig. 1)**

3.1 The site is located in the area of Leverstock Green, within the parish of St Michael in the St Albans district of Hertfordshire (Fig. 1). The site lies to the south-east of Westwick Row, a dispersed rural hamlet, as well as Leverstock Green, which is now considered an adjunct of Hemel Hempstead. The settlement has escaped physical incorporation, however, and despite the proximity of the M1 motorway, retains its essentially rural character.

3.2 The assessment structure, No. 1 Beechtree Cottages, is situated on the south side of Hemel Hempstead Road (A4147) which extends eastwards from Leverstock Green. Several other historic buildings lie nearby including Corner Farm and other examples along Westwick Row, but open fields remain to the south with areas of woodland.

3.3 The house is a Grade II listed structure and sits within a fairly narrow plot of land extending to the south, which includes gardens as well as outbuildings such as a former forge (Fig. 2). The historic building listing for No. 1 Beech Tree Cottages ascribes a c. 1800 date for the main frontage with the rear wing being of 17<sup>th</sup> century or earlier date. The front range is noted as being of chequered red brickwork with dentilated eaves and plain tiled roof, while the rear wing is of timber-framed construction, encased in brick and plaster (Plate 1).

3.4 The external appearance of the house is consistent with the list description. On brief inspection of the interior, however, it is clear that the sequence of development is more complex. The roof was viewed through a small hatch in Bedroom 4 and provides clues as to the evolution of the house although a thorough investigation would be required to provide a full and accurate phasing.

3.5 The roof structure of the main range looks to be of some age, all of oak, although many of the rafter couples have been repositioned leaving nail marks from external battening visible to the interior. Nevertheless this suggests the brickwork of the main range represents cladding added in early 19<sup>th</sup> century or a phase of substantial rebuilding of an earlier range.

3.6 The rear wing comprises a two bay timber-framed range which intrudes at the north end into the area of the main body of the house. The relationship between this and the main range is not clear from the limited view of the junction at roof level but again indicates a greater level of complexity than the list description suggests. In addition the south-west unit which houses the bathroom at first floor level retains exposed timber-framing which is again of some age.

3.7 The focus of this recording was limited to the rear wing, however, where the 20<sup>th</sup> century brick skin covering the south gable end is being removed as well as a portion of pebble-dashing on the west elevation at upper level.

## 4 THE EVIDENCE

4.1 Local history sources and early modern cartographic sources have revealed that the house lay within the Gorhambury estate, which was focussed upon the dwellings of Old Gorhambury and Gorhambury House c. 2km to the north-west of the site. Gorhambury estate has its origins following the dissolution of the Benedictines priory, when the old house was built partly from fabric taken from the old abbey buildings in St Albans. The old house was constructed in 1563-8 by Sir Nicholas Bacon, who passed the estate to his son Sir Francis. It subsequently came to the Grimston family, who had the current Palladian-style house built in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

4.2 A 1634 map of Gorhambury (Ref. D/EV/P1) apparently does not extend as far as the position of the assessment range and so first readily available cartographic source is the Dury & Andrews' map of Hertfordshire, produced in 1766 (Fig. 3). This depicts the grounds and parkland of the Gorhambury Estate, focused north-east on the main house, as well as what is now known as Hemel Hempstead Road. There are a number of buildings on the south side of the road, although little more can be noted apart from the presence of a structure in the vicinity of the site. A label to the east marks the position of a beech tree.

4.3 The 1768 Gorhambury estate map, which was compiled only two years after the previous cartographic source, provides significantly more detail (Fig. 4). The house is visible but is clearly part of a larger complex of structures, possibly a farm, with ranges to the east. It is set in a narrow plot of land extending to the south, named the Pightle, meaning small enclosure. The house fronts onto the road and is depicted as an L-shaped range with extensions on the west.

4.4 Bryant's map of Hertfordshire, produced in 1822 (not reproduced here), was drawn at a significantly smaller scale than the previous map and although structures are visible, no useful detail is discernible. In 1850, however, a new estate map was produced (Fig. 5). Although the wider boundaries are unchanged, there has been substantial alteration within the vicinity of the house. The complex of buildings to the east is no longer depicted and only small outbuildings lie along the west boundary and to the rear of the house. The house is also shown on a slightly differing alignment and following a differing outline than the previous source as well as the current building and is also shown offset to the west.

4.5 In 1878, the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey (OS) was produced (Fig. 6). By this time, the adjoining site has been redeveloped with the construction of a pair of cottages, the complex now labelled as Beechtree Cottages, presumably named for the beech tree at the crossroads to the east. The house now follows much the same outline as exists today, although the variation in the earlier outline is likely more due to the inaccuracies of the survey rather than representing rebuilding. As it exists at this time the house comprises, as it does now, an L-shaped range with a unit in the re-entrant angle. A bench mark is labelled as located on the north elevation of the house. Outbuildings are visible to the west and south of the house as on previous sources.

4.6 Comparison between this 1878 map and the next two OS maps produced in 1898 (Fig. 7) and 1924 (Fig. 8) show no noticeable changes or alterations to the buildings within the site. In 1930, much of the estate including the assessment structure and neighbouring property was put up for sale by the Grimston family, the then Earl of Verulam. An associated plan is reproduced as Fig. 9 which indicates various sales plots, though the plan is not accompanied by the sales particulars themselves and so no details of the property are known. It is possible that Beechtree Cottages were purchased by the Crown Estate, which bought and continues to own much of the Gorhambury estate, although this is not confirmed.

## 5 The rear range

5.1 The rear wing was inspected in more detail prior to the planned works in order to gather information relating to the construction of the rear gable end, while evidence exposed during the removal of the Fletton brickwork has been incorporated into the existing record.

### *Exterior*

5.2 From the exterior little timber-framing is exposed, although the presence of plain render on the east and west elevations at upper level suggests at least partial survival (Plate 2). The lower framework on the east has been replaced with a variable orange 19<sup>th</sup> brick. This is laid in Flemish bond and the original penny-struck pointing survives in places. The range rises to a steeply-pitched roof covered in peg-tiles and below the eaves on the east, the wall-plate and a tie-beam end is visible.

5.3 The south gable end has been entirely clad in 20<sup>th</sup> century Fletton-type bricks laid in Flemish bond (Plate 3). This comprises a brick skin, indicated where the wall-plate is set in from the visible brickwork but removal of this during the planned works reveals



that the brickwork continues for a further brick depth infilling the surviving elements of the timber frame.

5.4 Initial observation taking into account the surviving internal timber elements, suggested the upper timber frame survived all round to some extent, but that at ground floor level this had been replaced in brick, perhaps to replace degraded timber elements or to bring the house up to date with current fashions. Once the Fletton brick was removed from the gable end it was clear that the 19<sup>th</sup> century brick of the east elevation continued to the corner and supported the truncated corner post of the gable reinforcing the suggestion that the brickwork continued around this end of the range in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The removal of the Fletton brickwork and exposure of the timber elements provided additional information regarding the original construction, which is all of oak construction though heavily degraded, this resulting from the application of the Fletton brickwork which would have subsequently trapped moisture causing the timber to decay.

5.5 What survives of the gable end includes the principal structural members, such as those visible from the interior. These include the corner posts which survive at upper level, tie-beam, collar and rafters (Plate 4). The corner posts have gently swelling jowls, while the tie-beam is fairly waney and slightly cambered extending over and dovetailed to slightly protruding wall-plates. The mid-rail is lost although mortices in the outer posts mark its position as does a bridging joist from the interior which retains a tenon with two peg-holes. Timber framing infill of the upper register is mostly lost although truncated fragments and the pattern of peg-holes allows the original form to be reconstructed (Plate 5). The posts were braced to the tie-beam and double-pegging survives with the truncated stumps of the braces which were presumably slightly curved as seen elsewhere. A peg in the tie-beam indicates a lower central stud, while the opposing north wall of the range bears marked similarities and suggests a pair of outer studs where the braces met the tie-beam.

5.6 Further fabric survives above tie-beam level but again with some loss. The original truss pattern was of queen post form, the queen posts lost but indicated by empty mortices. The queen posts rose from the tie-beam to a fairly robust collar, single-pegged both top and bottom. The collar survives, clasping a single robust purlin in each pitch over which the principal rafters ride to the apex where they are halved and pegged. The absence of mortices in the face of the collar suggests no studs were present above collar level.

5.7 A pattern of holes in the soffit of the collar and tie-beam as well as the presence of continuous grooves in the face of these members indicates that the original infill was of wattle and daub (Plate 6). Despite damage caused by the application of brickwork, it appears that this gable comprised the external end of the range as the timber is weathered, while the wall-plate ends are slightly shaped. Fig. 13 shows the form of the gable end with surviving timber elements as well as extrapolated lost members at upper level.

5.8 The second phase of the planned works comprised the removal modern 20<sup>th</sup> century pebble-dashing and cement render as well as underlying lath and plaster on the west elevation above the pent-roof of the kitchen outshut. This exposed elements of the underlying timber-frame which survives in good condition. The original south corner post is now exposed on this side and is single-pegged to the wall-plate, both members

with a small chiselled assembly mark comprising a I with a tag. An original curved brace survives from the corner post and this also retains an identical assembly mark at the base. To the interior, modern plasterboard is visible. To the north is a single pegged stud and between is further evidence for wattle and daub infill in the form of three of four surviving wattle staves as well as a small section of daub. This is a fairly orange buff coloured mortar with a high straw content and chalk pebble inclusions.

5.9 Of interest on this side is the survival of an original mullioned window which utilises two studs to the north and has a horizontal pegged sill with three diamond mullions, all surviving (Plate 7). This was clearly made redundant, possibly at a fairly early date, by the addition of the adjoining outshut as the roof line extends across the window. Nail marks are visible across all members for the later lath and plasterwork and slender vertical members were also added, simply notched and nailed to the wall-plate above.

5.10 Where possible the scantlings of the surviving original members were measured and are as follows:

|                        |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Corner post            | 8" x 7½" (203mm x 191mm)  |
| Tie-beam               | 8" x 7½" (203mm x 191mm)  |
| Wall-plate             | 6¾" x 5½" (171mm x 140mm) |
| Rafter (lower section) | 4" x 2½" (102mm x 64mm)   |
| Purlin                 | 4" x 5" (102mm x 127mm)   |
| Collar                 | 7" x 5" (178mm x 127mm)   |
| Stud (west elevation)  | 4½" x 3" (114mm x 76mm)   |
| Brace (west elevation) | 7 ½" (191mm)              |
| Window mullion         | 1¾" x 1¾" (44mm x 44mm)   |

### *Interior*

5.11 The interior of the rear wing at ground floor level includes an entrance hall to the north which houses the staircase to first floor level as well as a sitting room to the south. the remainder of the house is given access from the entrance hall on the north. At first floor level, the north bay is occupied by the staircase and a small bedroom (Bedroom 4), the staircase again giving access to the principal range, while Bedroom 3 occupies the whole of the south bay. The rooms partly occupy the roof space and are ceiled just below collar level in Bedroom 3 and above collar level in Bedroom 4.

5.12 The principal elements of the timber frame are exposed throughout the rear wing. This includes three trusses comprising the north and south walls of the range and a central truss as well as elements of the east and west walls at upper level and occasional members at ground floor level.

5.13 At ground floor level the sitting room retains a bridging joist which is chamfered with lambs tongue chamfer stops at either end as well as a recent secondary inserted binding joist at the south end which appears to support this end of the bridging joist.

5.14 In general the exposed fabric at upper level is consistent with that seen on the south gable end so that the trusses include jowled corner and bay posts with slightly cambered tie-beams (Plate 8). The timber here is well preserved and as noted from the exterior the posts are braced to both the tie-beams and wall-plates with slightly curving

braces. Internally, these are only exposed on the west wall of Bedroom 3 and the north wall of Bedroom 4 but peg-holes mark their position elsewhere. In addition, further peg-holes mark the position of lower studs on all walls, while there is no sign of the original west window in Bedroom 3 as seen from the exterior and it appears that this room is mostly lined with modern plasterboard.

5.15 The upper structure above tie-beam level is well expressed on the north wall of Bedroom 4 and replicates that of the south gable end. It is of queen post form, the queen posts rising from the tie-beam to a fairly wide collar. The queen posts are single-pegged both top and bottom. The collar clasps a robust purlin over which the principal rafters ride. In addition, the roof pitches to either side preserve wind braces from the principal rafters to the purlins. These are either straight or very slightly curved.

## 6 DISCUSSION

6.1 Historic building recording was carried out in order to record the surviving elements of the south gable end of the rear wing as well as allowing a reconstruction of the lost elements where possible. This was based on evidence exposed during the planned work, while further investigations on both the rear wing and main range would provide additional information allowing a more accurate phasing to be produced.

6.2 However, technical analysis prior to and during the planned works allows the appearance of the south gable end to be reconstructed with some certainty as well as providing further evidence as to the form of the range. The construction of the range is of two floored bays and no evidence survives to suggest they were originally heated although more detailed investigations in the future may suggest otherwise.

6.3 The original construction is characterised by trusses consisting of jowled posts with slightly cambered tie-beams with a queen post clasped side-purlin roof over. The timber-framing otherwise comprised fairly widely-spaced studs with infill panels of wattle and daub, most of which has been lost though one or two wattle staves and a small section of daub survived on the west. An original mullion window survives in good condition on the west at first floor level, exposed during the planned works, and is likely that a similar window lay on the east, replaced with the existing window.

6.4 The list description ascribes a 17<sup>th</sup> century or earlier date to the rear wing and this is consistent with the exposed fabric. The use of jowled posts, lambs tongue chamfer stops and wattle and daub infill can be associated with a 16<sup>th</sup> or early 17<sup>th</sup> century date, while the fairly wide-spaced nature of the studs and fairly straight wind-braces may indicate a date later in the time-frame.

6.5 The original window appears to have been made redundant with the addition of the pent-roofed lean-to attached to the rear of the main range, the roof-line of which bisects the window. The early 19<sup>th</sup> century saw a massive upgrading of the whole property with the brickwork to the principal front range and perhaps shortly after the lower timber frame of the rear range was replaced in brick as survives on the east elevation. Monitoring during the planned works exposed evidence suggesting this was also the case for the south elevation. With the application of the Fletton brickwork in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, much of the timber-frame was lost although enough fabric survives to indicate the original form as shown on Fig. 13, while the loss of the mid-rail and lower



sections of corner posts means the original pattern of timber-framing at ground floor level cannot be reconstructed.

6.6 The current observations were limited to a small section of the building, and although outside the scope of this project, this house is worthy of further study, allowing the complex history of the building to be understood.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions Ltd. would like to thank Point Builders Ltd. for commissioning the project on behalf of their client.

AS would also like to acknowledge the advice of Ms Laura Levitt and Mr Simon West of SADC

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## Web resources

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england/>

## APPENDIX 1 BUILDING LISTING

### List entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

**Name:** BEECHTREE COTTAGES

**List entry Number:** 1347242

**Location:** BEECHTREE COTTAGES, 1, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD ROAD

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

| County        | District   | District Type      | Parish      |
|---------------|------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Hertfordshire | St. Albans | District Authority | St. Michael |

**National Park:** Not applicable to this List entry.

**Grade:** II

**Date first listed:** 27-Sep-1984

**Date of most recent amendment:** Not applicable to this List entry.

### Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

**Legacy System:** LBS

**UID:** 163833

### Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

### List entry Description

#### Details:

TL 10 NW ST MICHAEL HEMEL HEMPSTEAD ROAD  
(south side)

9/289 No 1 Beechtree Cottages

II

House. Circa 1800 front block; C17 or earlier rear wing. Chequered red brick front, the rear range timber frame cased in brick and plaster. Plain tile roofs. The front is 2 storeys. Dentilled brick eaves. 2 flush sash windows, the ground floor ones segmental headed. Blocked door left of centre. Side elevation has early C19 plank door with cut bracketed pediment hood. The rear block is 2 storeys with 1 glazing bar casement to ground and 1st floor. W side of rear has a truncated gable end next to front block.

Listing NGR: TL1023405969

## APPENDIX 2 CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

| <b>Fig.</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Title</b>                                                              | <b>Scale</b> | <b>Location</b> |
|-------------|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 3           | 1766        | Dury & Andrews' map of Hertfordshire                                      | -            | AS              |
| 4           | 1768        | Map of Gorhambury                                                         | -            | HALS            |
| -           | 1822        | Bryant's map of Hertfordshire                                             | -            | AS              |
| 5           | 1850        | Map of Gorhambury                                                         | -            | HALS            |
| 6           | 1878        | 1 <sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map, Hertfordshire sheet XXXIV.10 | 25"          | HALS            |
| 7           | 1898        | 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map, Hertfordshire sheet XXXIV.10 | 25"          | HALS            |
| 8           | 1924        | 3 <sup>rd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map, Hertfordshire sheet XXXIV.10 | 25"          | HALS            |
| 9           | 1930        | Plan from the Gorhambury Estate sales particulars                         | 25"          | HALS            |

## PLATES



Plate 1 View of the house with front range and lower rear wing, taken from the north-east (DP 9)



Plate 2 East elevation of the rear wing, taken from the south-east (DP 10)





Plate 3 South gable end of the rear wing, taken from the south (DP 13)



Plate 4 Surviving principal timbers at first floor level, taken from the south-east during monitoring (DP 44)



Plate 5 South-east corner post showing exposed brace mortise, taken from the south during monitoring (DP 48)



Plate 6 View of the collar soffit showing wattle stave holes, taken from the west during monitoring (DP 50)





Plate 7 Original mullion window on the west elevation exposed after the removal of lath and plasterwork, taken from the south-west during monitoring (DP 59)



Plate 8 First floor room of the rear wing (Bedroom 3) showing the gable end, taken from the north (DP 21)



## PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



DP 1

*View of the junction of the rear and main ranges (roof level), taken from the east*



DP 2

*View of the timber-framed partition at roof level within the main range over the north wall of the rear wing, taken from the south-east*



DP 3

*South wall plate of the main range showing scarf joint, taken from the east*



DP 4

*Roof space over the rear wing above collar level, taken from the north*



DP 5

*View of the junction of the south-west unit with the rafters of the rear range, taken from the north-east*



DP 6

*Typical sample of the chequered brickwork on the north elevation of the main range, taken from the north*





DP 7

View of the north elevation showing straight joint in the brickwork indicating blocking or alteration, taken from the north-east



DP 8

View of the assessment structure, taken from the north-east



DP 9

East side of the main range with lower rear wing, taken from the north-east



DP 10

East elevation of the rear wing, taken from the south-east



DP 11

East elevation of the rear wing (south end), taken from the east



DP 12

Detail showing the difference in brickwork on the east side of the rear wing (south end), taken from the east



DP 13

*South gable end of the rear wing, taken from the south*



DP 14

*Typical sample of the brickwork on the south gable end of the rear wing, taken from the south*



DP 15

*West and south sides of the rear wing, taken from the south-west*



DP 16

*South-west unit housing the kitchen, taken from the south-west*



DP 17

*View of the assessment structure, taken from the south-west*



DP 18

*Ground floor room of the rear wing (sitting room) showing the gable end, taken from the north*





*DP 19  
Lamb's tongue chamfer stop on the bridging joist in the sitting room, taken from the north-east*



*DP 20  
View of the lobby area with WC to the rear, taken from the east*



*DP 21  
First floor room of the rear wing (Bedroom 3) showing the gable end, taken from the north*



*DP 22  
Detail of the timber-framing in the south-east corner (Bedroom 3), taken from the north*



*DP 23  
Detail of the timber-framing in the south-west corner (Bedroom 3), taken from the east*



*DP 24  
First floor room of the rear wing (Bedroom 3) showing the central internal wall, taken from the south*



DP 25

*North-east corner of the rear wing (Bedroom 4), taken from the south-west*



DP 26

*North wall of the rear wing (Bedroom 4), taken from the south*



DP 27

*North wall of the rear wing (Bedroom 4) above tie-beam level, taken from the south*



DP 28

*Queen post on the north wall of Bedroom 3 showing peg and assembly mark (emphasised and indicated), taken from the south*





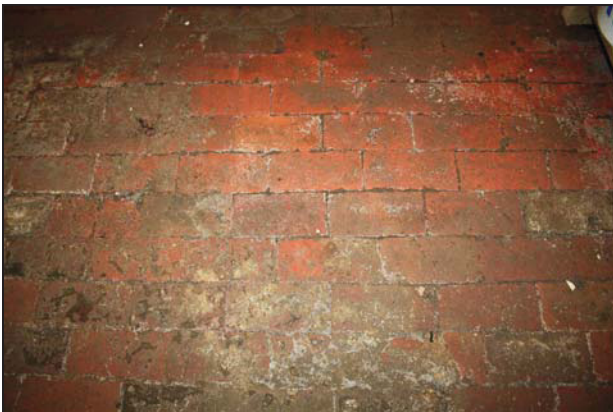
DP 29

*Timber-framing of the central wall of the rear wing from the cellar stairs, taken from the west*



DP 30

*South wall of the cellar, taken from the north*



DP 31

*Brickwork floor of the cellar, taken from the east*



DP 32

*Gable end of the rear wing at upper level, taken from the east during monitoring*



DP 33

*Gable end of the rear wing at upper level, taken from the south during monitoring*



DP 34

*Gable end of the rear wing at upper level, taken from the south-west during monitoring*





DP 35

*Weathered purlin end and collar, taken from the south during monitoring*



DP 36

*Weathered purlin end and collar with pegged rafter, taken from the south during monitoring*



DP 37

*Detail showing framing arrangement at the head of the south-west corner post, taken from the south during monitoring*



DP 38

*Surviving principal timbers at first floor level, taken from the south-west during monitoring*



DP 39

*Detail showing framing arrangement at the head of the south-east corner post, taken from the south-west during monitoring*



DP 40

*Soffit of the tie-beam showing wattle stave holes, taken from the south during monitoring*





*DP 41*  
*Truncated and degraded south-west corner post, taken from the south-west during monitoring*



*DP 42*  
*Truncated and degraded south-east corner post, taken from the south during monitoring*



*DP 43*  
*Framing arrangement at the head of the south-east corner post showing chamfered wall-plate (partially lost), taken from the south during monitoring*



*DP 44*  
*Surviving principal timbers at first floor level, taken from the south-east during monitoring*



*DP 45*  
*Surviving principal timbers at first floor level, taken from the south-east during monitoring*



*DP 46*  
*Tie-beam soffit showing wattle stave holes and brace/stud mortice, taken from the south during monitoring*





*DP 47  
Surviving principal timbers at first floor level, taken from the south-west during monitoring*



*DP 48  
South-east corner post showing exposed brace mortice, taken from the south during monitoring*



*DP 49  
Framing arrangement at the head of the south-east corner post, taken from the south during monitoring*



*DP 50  
View of the collar soffit showing wattle stave holes, taken from the west during monitoring*



*DP 51  
Exposed timber-framing on the west elevation of the rear range, taken from the south during monitoring*



*DP 52  
Detail of the end of the gable showing assembly markings (emphasised), taken from the south-west during monitoring*



DP 53

West elevation at upper level showing original wattle stave and later applied studs, taken from the west during monitoring



DP 54

South-west corner post and brace on the west elevation showing assembly mark (emphasised), taken from the west during monitoring



DP 55

Original mullion window on the west elevation exposed after the removal of lath and plasterwork, taken from the south-west during monitoring



DP 56

Fragment of daub from the west elevation removed during planned works



DP 57

Fragment of daub from the west elevation removed during planned works



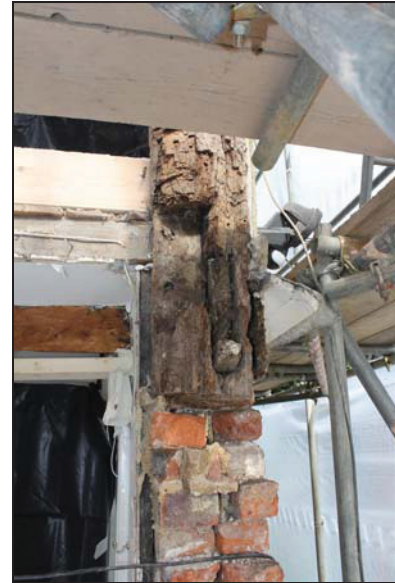
DP 58

View of the collar soffit showing wattle stave holes, taken from the south-west during monitoring





*DP 59  
East end of the south gable at ground floor level  
after removal of later brickwork, taken from the  
south-west during monitoring*



*DP 60  
Truncated south-east corner post showing exposed  
mortice for the lost mid-rail, taken from the south  
during monitoring*



*DP 61  
West end of the south gable at ground floor level  
after removal of later brickwork, taken from the  
south-east during monitoring*



*DP 62  
Truncated south-west corner post showing exposed  
mortice for the lost mid-rail, taken from the south-  
east during monitoring*



*DP 63  
South end of the bridging joist in the sitting room  
showing pegged tenon for the lost mid-rail, taken  
from the west during monitoring*

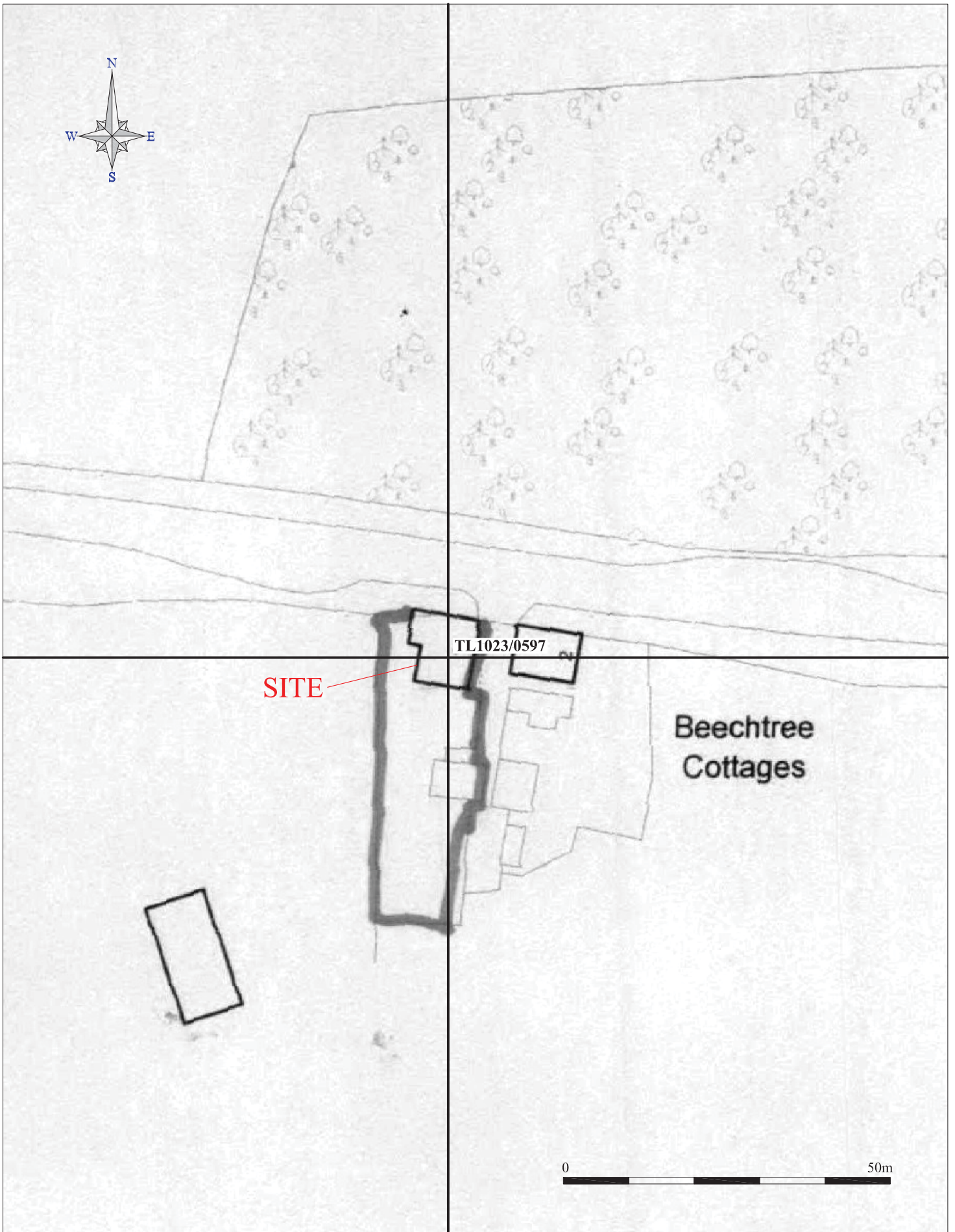




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**Fig. 1 Site location plan**  
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4

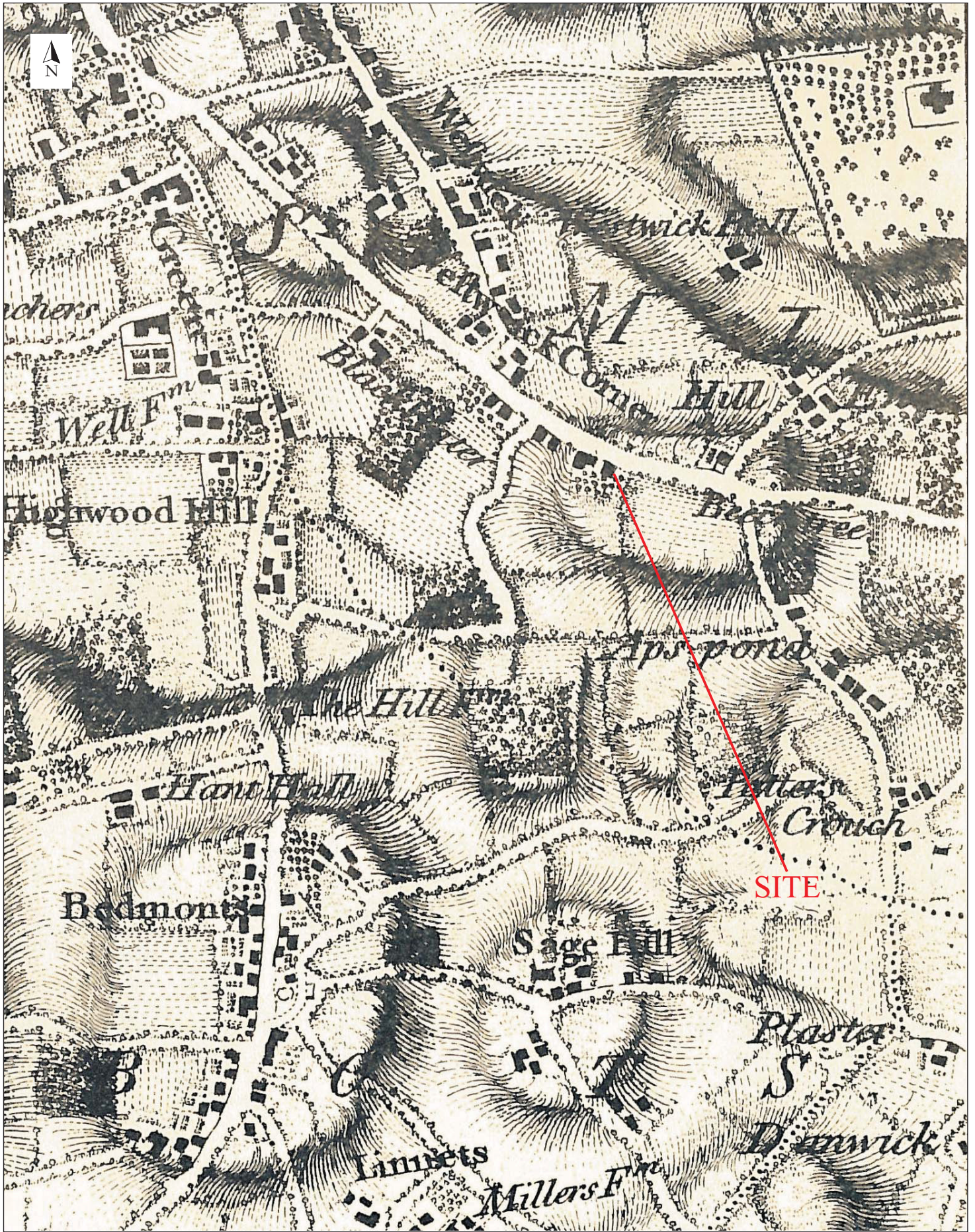




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**Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan**  
Scale 1:1250 at A4



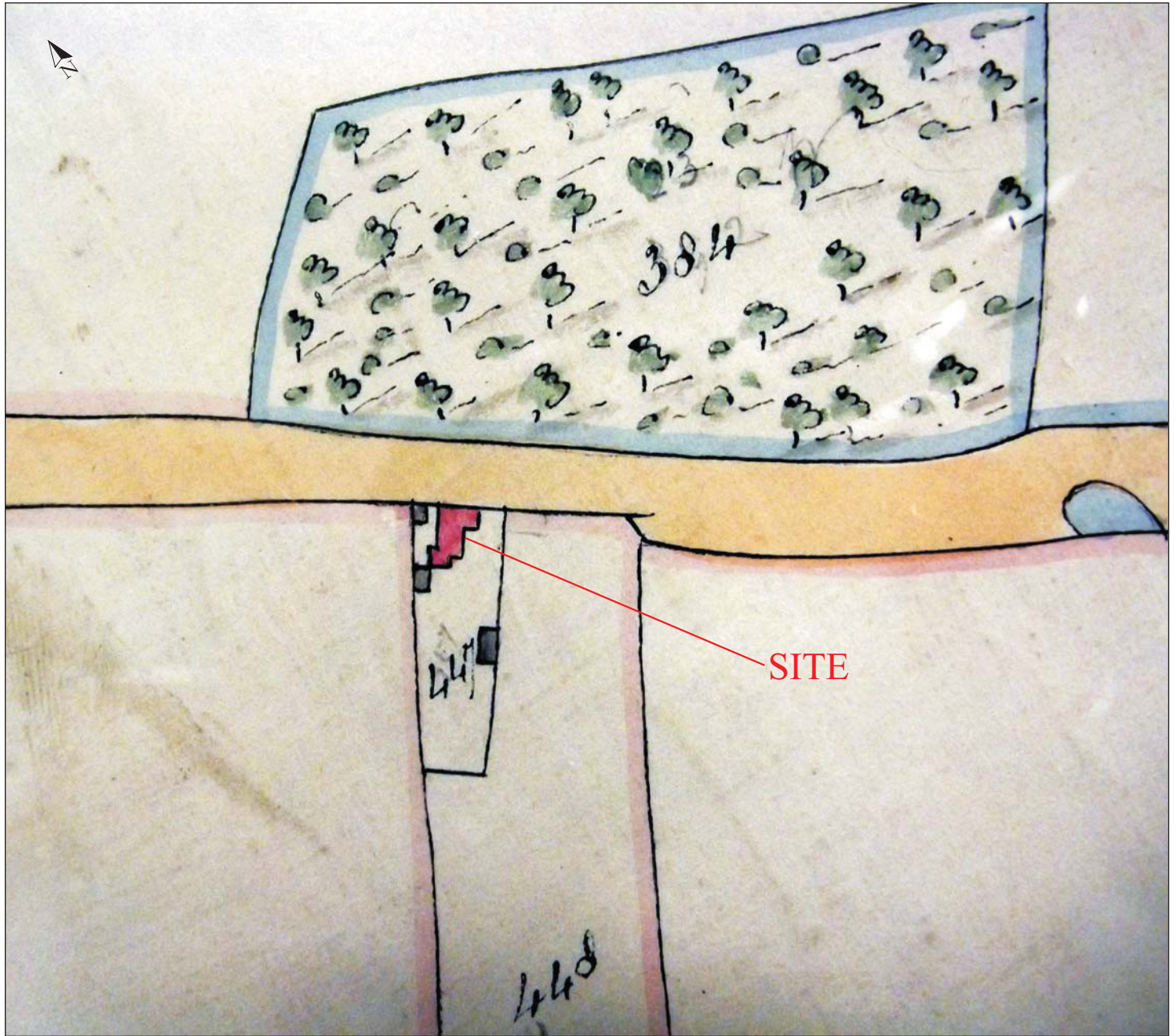


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Fig. 3 Dury & Andrews' map, 1766  
Not to scale



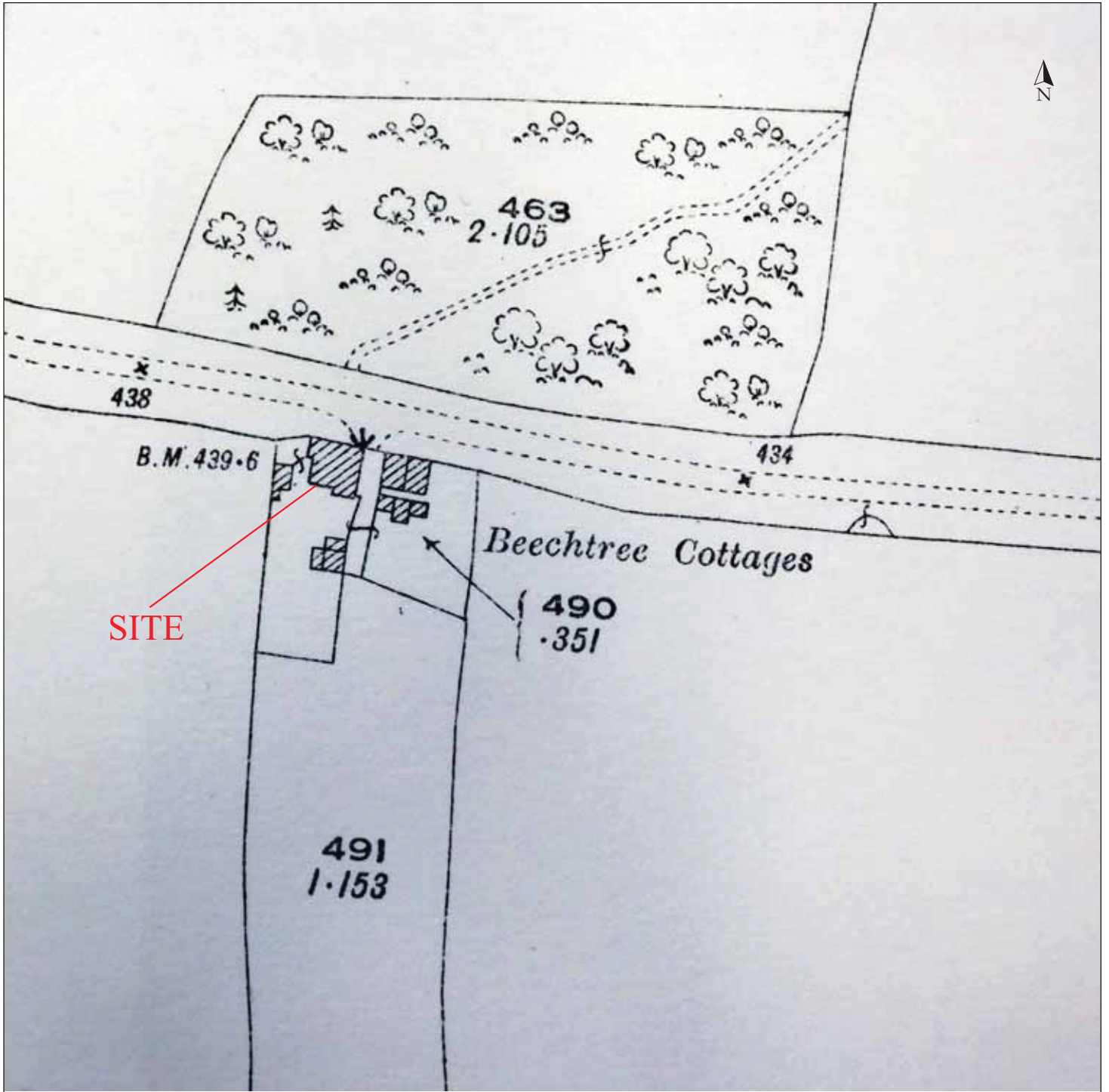


*Archaeological Solutions Ltd*  
Fig. 4 Gorhambury estate map, 1768  
Not to scale



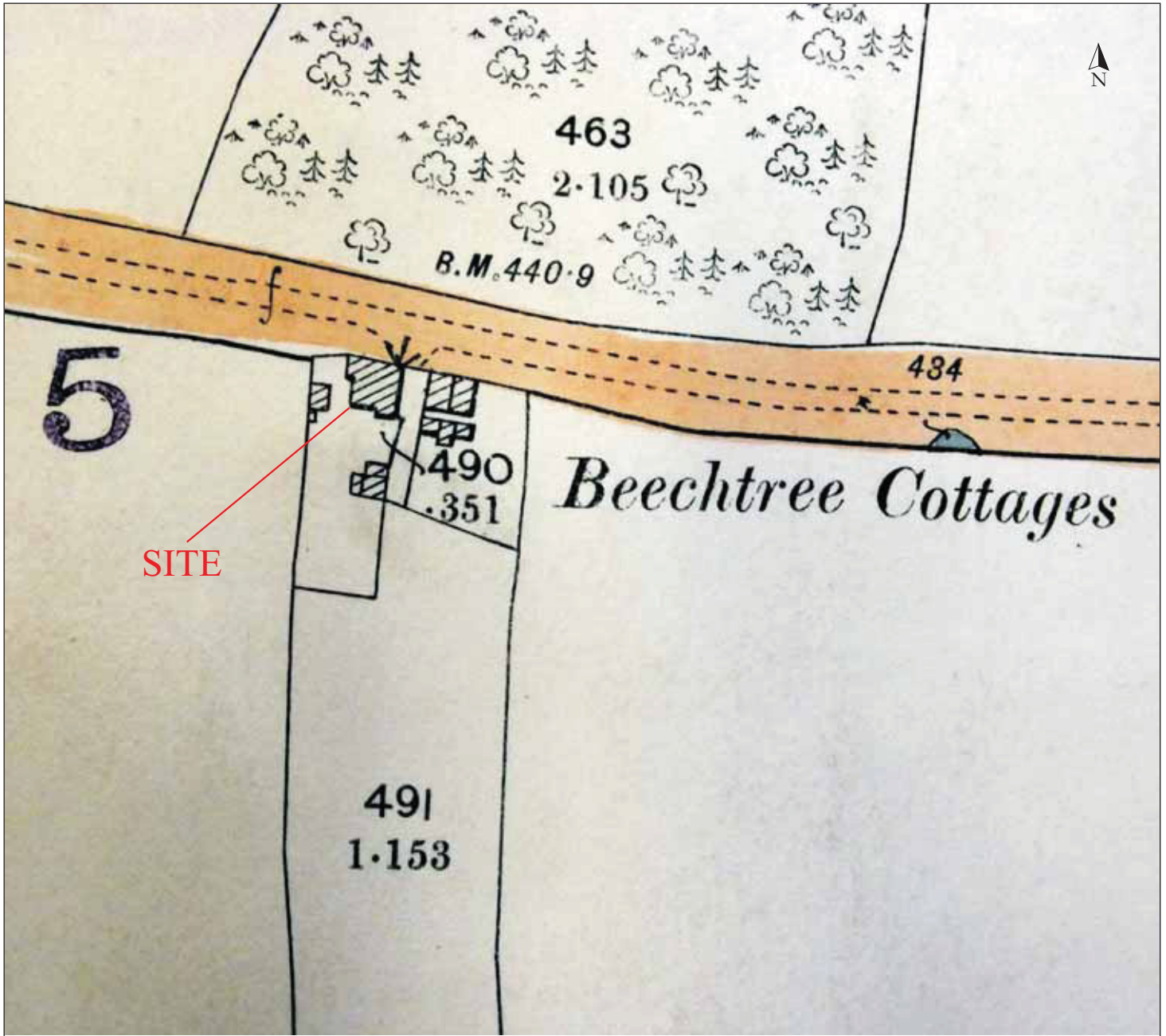
*Archaeological Solutions Ltd*  
Fig. 5 Gorhambury estate map, 1850  
Not to scale



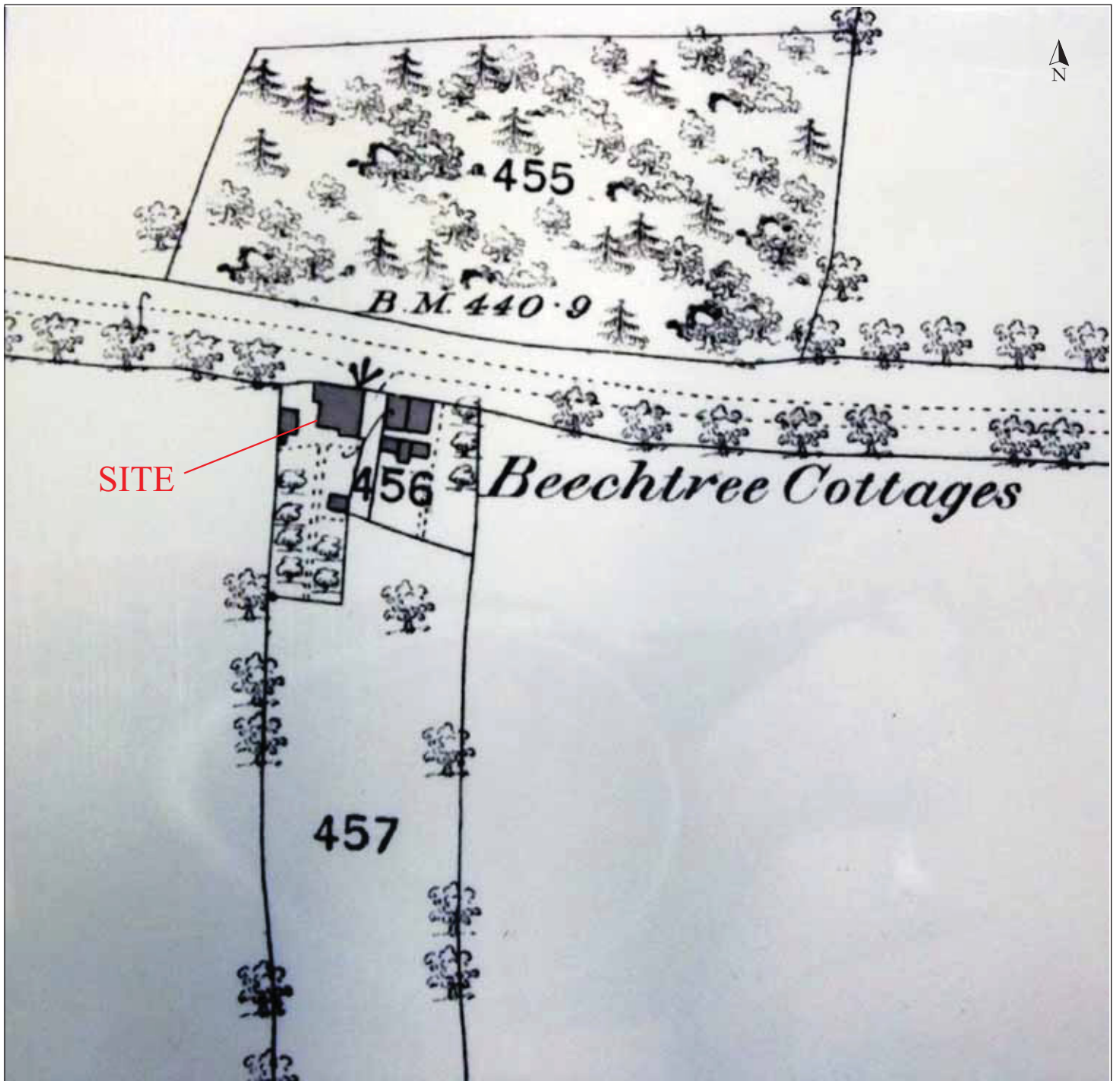


SITE

|                                     |
|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Archaeological Solutions Ltd</i> |
| <b>Fig. 6 OS map, 1878</b>          |
| Not to scale                        |

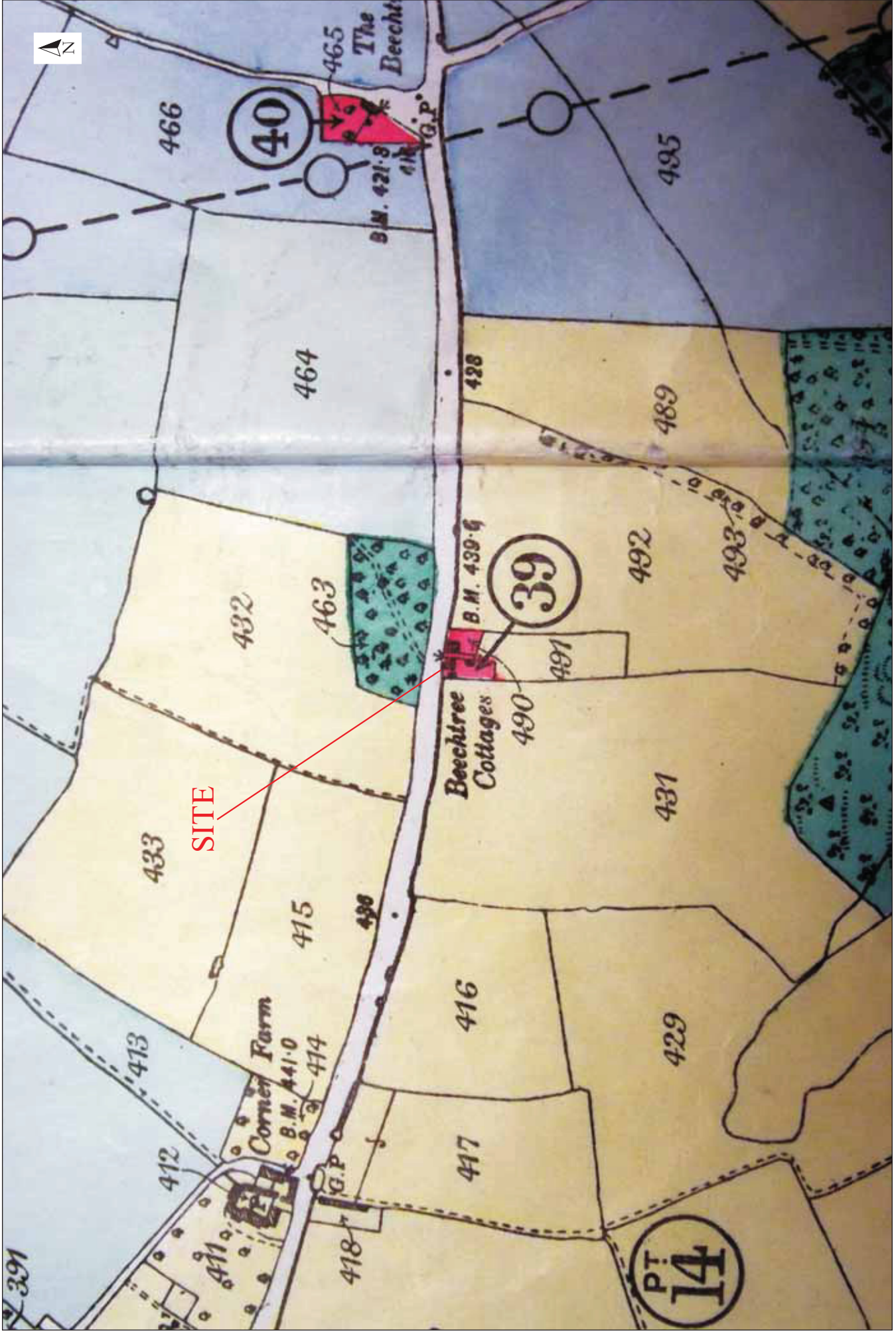


|                                     |
|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Archaeological Solutions Ltd</i> |
| <b>Fig. 7 OS map, 1898</b>          |
| Not to scale                        |



|                                     |
|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Archaeological Solutions Ltd</i> |
| <b>Fig. 8 OS map, 1924</b>          |
| Not to scale                        |





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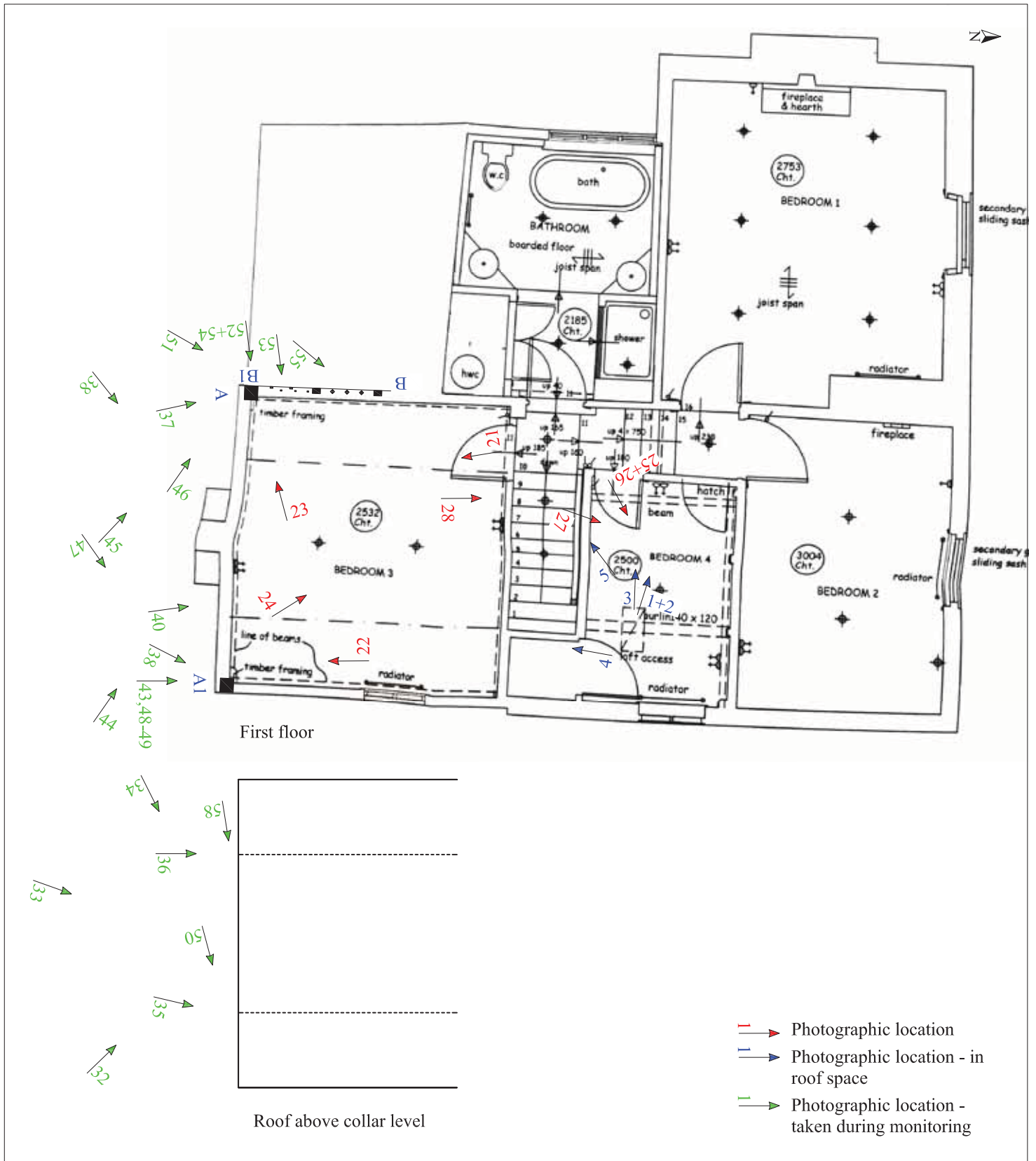
Fig. 9 Sales particulars, 1930

Not to scale



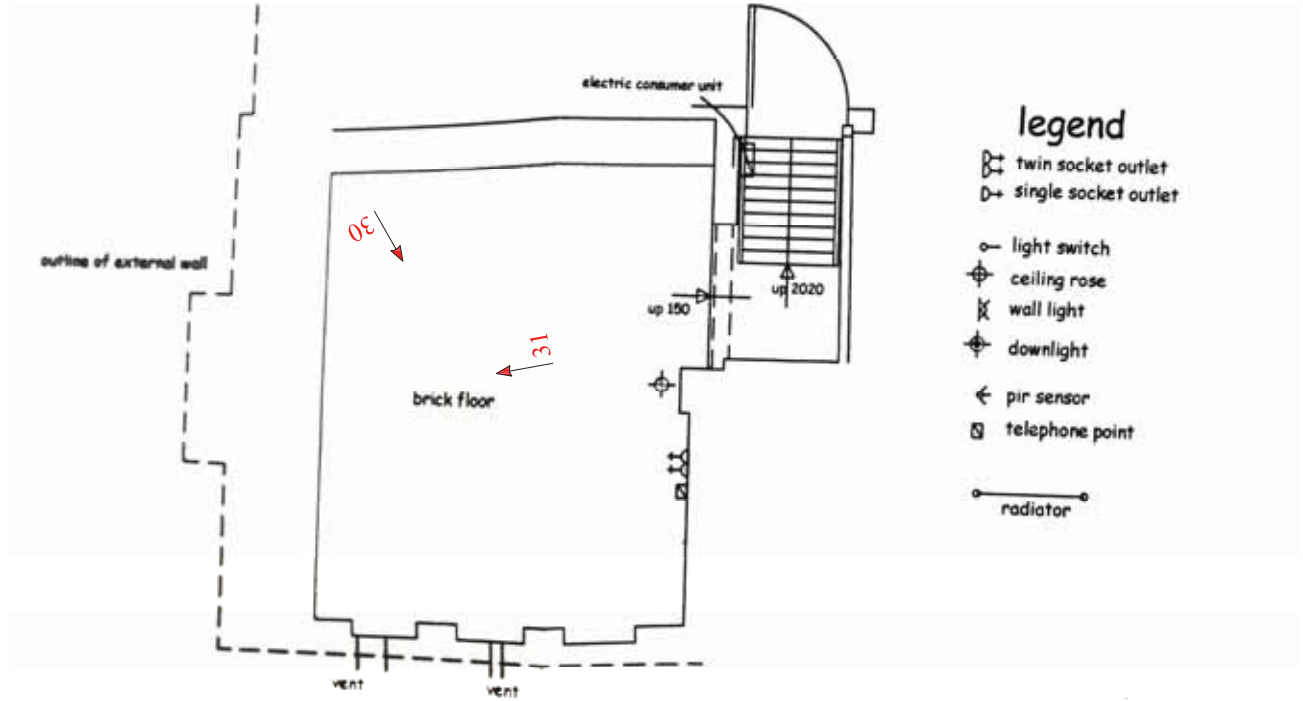
Fig. 10 Photographic location plan - ground floor  
Not to scale

taken during monitoring












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**Fig. 11 Photographic location plans**  
 Not to scale





### legend

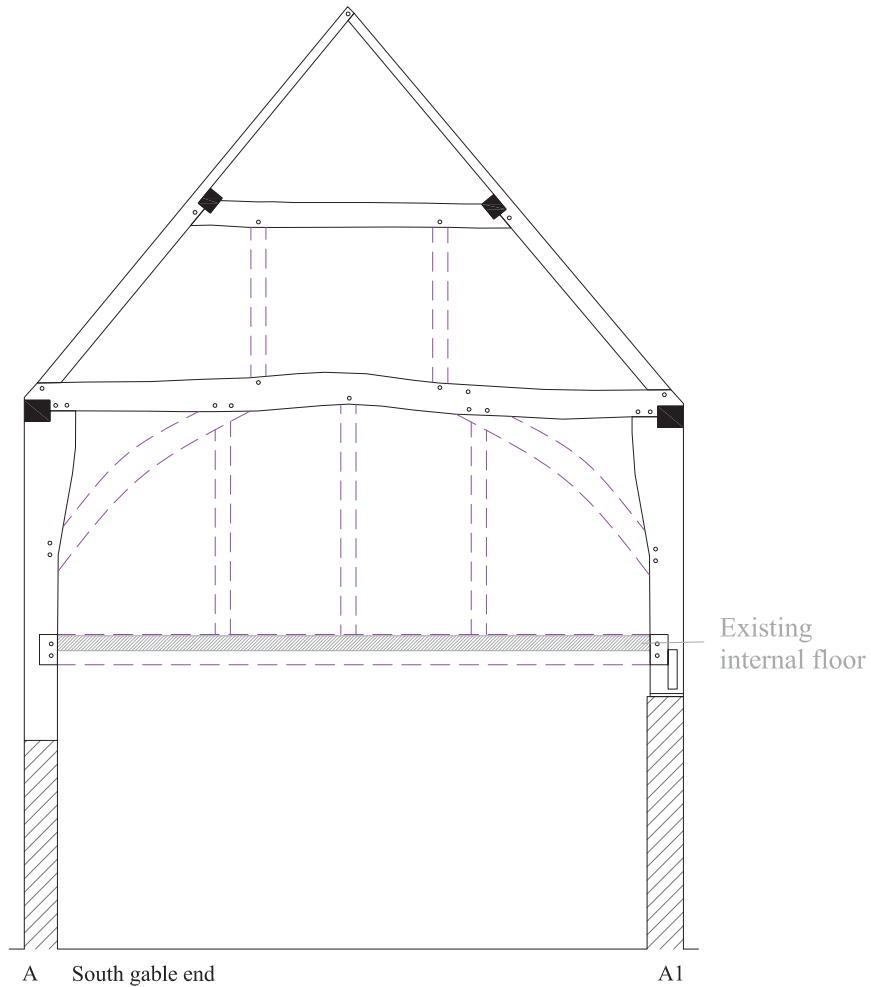
-  twin socket outlet
-  single socket outlet
-  light switch
-  ceiling rose
-  wall light
-  downlight
-  pir sensor
-  telephone point
-  radiator

 Photographic location

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**Fig. 12** Photographic location plan - basement

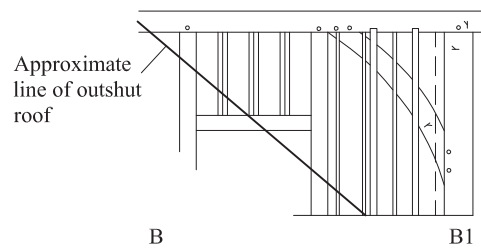
Not to scale



A South gable end

A1

No surviving evidence for the pattern of timber framing at ground floor level.



Approximate line of outshut roof

B

B1

Section of west elevation after removal of later pebble-dashing and cement render

--- Extrapolated timber

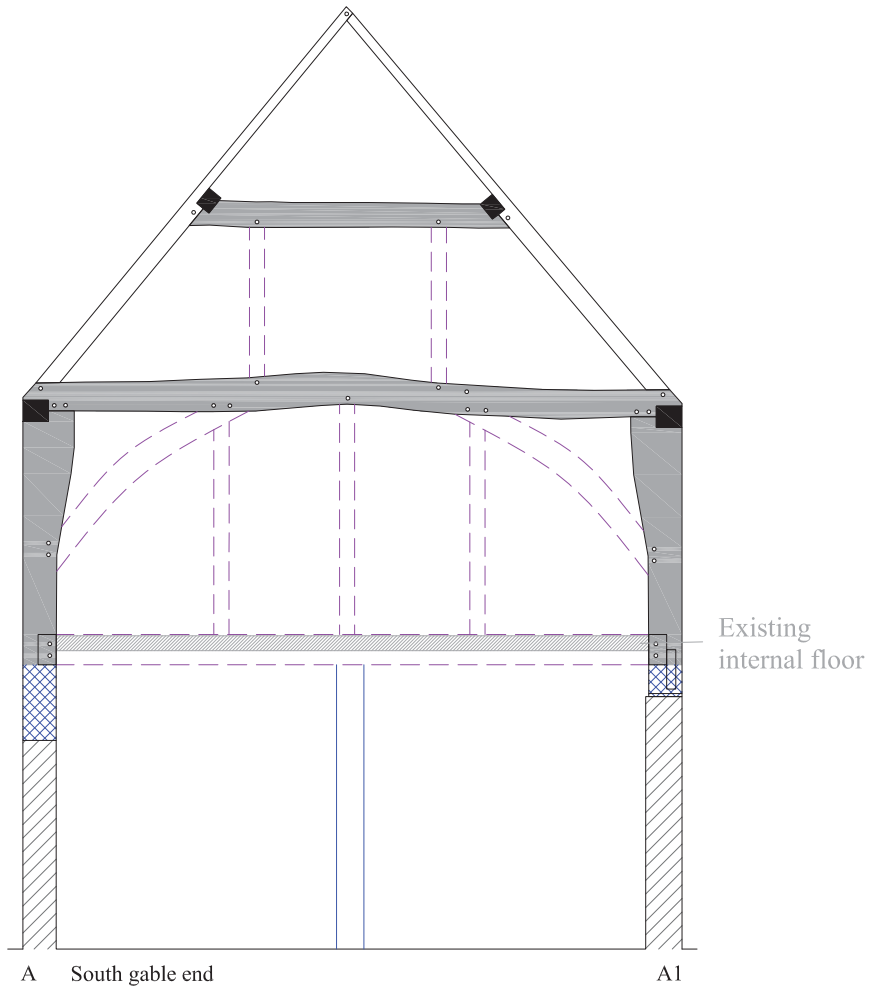


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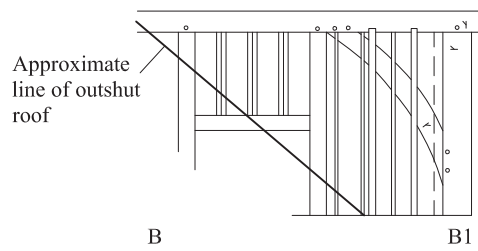
**Fig. 13 Rear wing - south gable end and section of west elevation (first floor)**

Scale 1:50 at A4





No surviving evidence for the pattern of timber framing at ground floor level. Ground floor to be replaced in brick, upper floor with lime render infill.



Section of west elevation after removal of pebble-dashing and cement render - to be reinstated with lime render

- Existing timbers, where rotten, to be cut back to sound fabric and new oak scarfed in
  - Rotten timber to be removed
  - New oak timber
  - Extrapolated timber to be reinstated in oak
- 0  2m

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**Fig. 14 Elevation drawings with proposed work indicated**  
 Scale 1:50 at A4