

**DOWN GREEN HOUSE, HARPENDEN ROAD
WHEATHAMPSTEAD**

HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD

DOWN GREEN HOUSE, HARPENDEN ROAD
WHEATHAMPSTEAD

HISTORIC BUILDING APPRAISAL

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NGR: TL 1657 1378	Report No. 3435
District: St. Albans	Site Code: AS 1256
Approved: Claire Halpin	Project No. 3350
MIFA	Date: November 2009
Signed:	

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Project details			
Project name	<i>Down Green House, Harpenden Road Wheathampstead</i>		
Project description (250 words)	<p><i>In October/November 2009, Archaeological Solutions Ltd conducted an historic building appraisal at Down Green House, near Wheathampstead. The appraisal was undertaken after a request from the client in order to comply with a condition of listed building consent, comprising a programme of building recording followed by observation during the course of the repair works</i></p> <p><i>Technical analysis shows that Down Green House is a mixture of 19th century and modern additions around a small, two-bay timber-framed house. The internal timber-work of the ancient core is still visible, though the structure has undergone much modification. The house began as a two-bay lobby- or baffle-entry house, probably of 16th-century date, as the outer walls retain redundant mortices for a system of closed studding typical of this date. This was extended in the 19th century with a new north – south wing on the east side of the old house while the west side was extended laterally by two bays to form a U-shaped structure. The courtyard arising from these extensions was itself later infilled by a double-gabled range. All appear to be broadly contemporary within a date range of the 1830s to 1880s.</i></p> <p><i>Inspection of the external render revealed a system of pargeting inconsistent with tradition, which comprised hard cement over machine-cut nailed laths or modern expanded steel mesh. The removal of the pargeting in the proposed areas of repair exposed the skeletal outline of the 16th-century timber-framing, with most timber-work apparently representing a phase of repair and reconfiguring which occurred in the late 17th or early 18th century.</i></p>		
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>16th October & 23rd November 2009</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work (Y/N/?)	<i>?</i>
P. number	<i>3350</i>	Site code	<i>AS 1256</i>
Type of project	<i>Historic Building Appraisal</i>		
Site status	<i>Listed Grade II</i>		
Current land use	<i>Dwelling</i>		
Planned development	<i>Repair to exterior</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Late 16th century house, later extended</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)			
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Herts</i>	<i>St Albans</i>	<i>Wheathampstead</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Herts HER</i>		
Post code (if known)			
Area of site			
NGR	<i>TL 1657 1378</i>		
Height AOD (max/ min)	<i>c. 23m AOD</i>		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	<i>SADC</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Tansy Collins, Lee Prosser</i>		
Funded by	<i>Martin Gore Esq</i>		
Full title	<i>Down Green House, Harpenden Road Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire. Historic Building Appraisal</i>		
Authors	<i>L. Prosser, T. Collins</i>		
Report no.	<i>3425</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>November 2009</i>		

DOWN GREEN HOUSE, HARPENDEN ROAD WHEATHAMPSTEAD HISTORIC BUILDING APPRAISAL

SUMMARY

In November 2009, Archaeological Solutions Ltd conducted an historic building appraisal at Down Green House, near Wheathampstead. The appraisal was undertaken after a request from the client in order to comply with a condition of listed building consent, comprising a programme of building recording followed by observation during the course of the repair works

Technical analysis shows that Down Green House is a mixture of 19th century and modern additions around a small, two-bay timber-framed house. The internal timber-work of the ancient core is still visible, though the structure has undergone much modification. The house began as a two-bay lobby- or baffle-entry house, probably of 16th-century date, as the outer walls retain redundant mortices for a system of closed studding typical of this date. This was extended in the 19th century with a new north – south wing on the east side of the old house while the west side was extended laterally by two bays to form a U-shaped structure. The courtyard arising from these extensions was itself later infilled by a double-gabled range. All appear to be broadly contemporary within a date range of the 1830s to 1880s.

Inspection of the external render revealed a system of pargeting inconsistent with tradition, which comprised hard cement over machine-cut nailed laths or modern expanded steel mesh. The removal of the pargeting in the proposed areas of repair exposed the skeletal outline of the 16th-century timber-framing, with most timber-work apparently representing a phase of repair and reconfiguring which occurred in the late 17th or early 18th century.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In November 2009, Archaeological Solutions Ltd conducted an historic building appraisal at Down Green House, Harpenden Road Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 1657 1378) (Fig. 1). The appraisal was undertaken after a request from the client in order to comply with a condition of listed building consent. This required a programme of building recording and analysis followed by a watching brief during the course of the repair works (St Albans District Council Planning Ref. 5/09/1235/LB). The works were commissioned by Botley Byrne Chartered Surveyors on behalf of the client Mr Martin Gore.

1.2 The appraisal was conducted in accordance with an advice letter issued by SADC dated 24th September 2008 and subsequent e-mail advice of 17th July 2009, along with a specification (written scheme of investigation) prepared by AS, dated 26th August 2009, and approved by SADC.

1.3 The historic building appraisal followed the procedures set out in English Heritage's 'Understanding historic buildings: a guide to good recording practice' (2006), and it also conformed to the Institute for Archaeologists' 'Standard and

guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures' (IFA 1999). The level of recording was to Level 2 / 3 as defined in the EH document.

1.4 The project comprised a comprehensive and high quality record of the building in its current form prior to alteration, including a drawn and photographic record along with a brief interpretive report. Monitoring during repair was carried out in order to supplement the record of the timber-frame prior to re-rendering.

1.5 The advice from SADC noted that attention should be paid to the location and authenticity of the pargeting, and whether the area of proposed repair is a modern copy of surviving earlier sections, plus an assessment of the survival and condition of any earlier sections. It was also noted that there may be a requirement for dendro-chronological dating so an inspection was undertaken to assess this possibility/necessity.

2 METHOD OF WORK

2.1 The site was initially visited on 16th October 2009 in order to compile the description and analysis of the buildings and undertake the drawing and photographic work. Tansy Collins and Lee Prosser carried out the written description and analysis. The drawing work was carried out by Kathren Henry and included the augmentation of existing architect's plans to include visible areas of timber-framing and the production of a cross-section. These are included as Figs. 3-4.

2.2 The photography was conducted by Tansy Collins using medium format (4.5 x 6 cm) black and white film and included all external views and general internal shots. This used a Zenza Bronica ETRS camera and Ilford HP5 IOS 400 film. Where necessary, finer architectural detail was captured with 35mm black and white film using a Minolta Dynax 40 camera. Colour photographs were taken using an Olympus Camedia E20 digital camera, duplicating the black and white photography. Supplementary colour photography was carried out with a Minolta Dynax 40 camera and 35 mm Kodak elite slide film. External lighting 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 (Fig. 3).

2.3 The site was revisited on the 23rd November in order to carry out further work in order to supplement the earlier findings. This occurred after the removal of areas of pargeting to reveal formerly hidden elements of the timber-frame. Additional information gathered is included in the text below with additions to the illustrations and photographic survey.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

3.1 The site lies in an area of dispersed settlement, which has remained rural and agricultural for much of recorded history. Place-names such as 'Down' or 'End' usually occur around more significant settlements such as Wheathampstead and Harpenden (Thompson. 2002) and almost invariably represent medieval expansion from larger villages into marginal land known as waste and woodland. This is a

process attested in Hertfordshire particularly from the 13th century onwards, as population expansion placed greater pressure on the land. Down Green House is almost certainly a reflection of this process and lies in a relatively open landscape between the two historic towns, on the north side of Harpenden Road which links the two settlements.

3.2 The building is listed Grade II as being of 17th century date, with 18th and 19th century extensions and alterations. The original date for this building can be refined somewhat with the detailed inspection available and is discussed below.

4 THE BUILDING

4.1 Down Green House comprises a north – south range with a cross-wing extending to the rear at the south end and various further extensions to the property. The house is now given access from a long drive extending parallel to Harpenden Road with the main entrance on the east side (Plate 1). This, however, comprises a relatively recent alteration and historically the south side of the building, principally the cross-wing was the principal façade and entrance. The building has suffered varying degrees of modification which obscures much of the original detail.

4.2 The main east façade comprises a mixture of pargeting and brick, the pargeting decorated with a crude basket weave pattern that is somewhat incongruous in appearance, and continues in places to ground level and even returns into the reveals of most of the windows. In addition repair can be seen with a mixture of scoring and stamping, some very crudely applied. This appears to be a mixture of old and new cement, now indiscriminately smothered in masonry paint, and does not give any impression of authenticity; this is discussed in more detail below.

4.3 The main entrance comprises an oak door framed by a timber porch with a pan-tiled roof, all entirely modern. Large windows at ground floor level are of casement form with leaded panes. It appears that some have been reworked as we see iron-framed windows to the south with refurbished heads and tile drip courses. Further similar casements lie at first floor level. This façade preserves two slender brick chimney stacks, one corbelled out at upper level. The stack adjoining the doorway is now painted, although some with straight skintles are visible, and is split at its base where it is pierced by a circular leaded window, which opens on a central pivot. The roof is covered in pan-tiles of no great age. To the south on this elevation the gable of the cross-wing has a simple moulded bargeboard. The drainpipes on this side are modern replacements and various other modern paraphernalia includes security cameras, alarm boxes etc.

4.4 The south elevation comprises the cross-wing extending to the west with a projecting bay, rising to a gable, in line with the north – south range. Two chimneys rising through the apex are visible. A large central chimney has four flues of perhaps 18th century date, the bricks appear vitrified and are laid in Flemish bond. A narrow chimney with a double flue set to the east is Victorian. The structure is again pargeted to ground level, but here clearly over 19th century brick at lower level, and in areas where the patterning has fallen away we see that it is Portland cement.

4.5 At the east end the bay is pierced by a wide leaded metal casement at each level, with two narrow examples in the return. At the apex is a crude weathervane.

The remainder of the range to the west comprises the exterior of the historic core and is pierced by smaller casements with a central porch constructed of Fletton brick with pargeting over.

4.6 The east – west range returns with a brick extension to the north, which has itself been extended with a single storey range to complete this west elevation. The west gable of the historic core comprises a wide six-light casement to the kitchen with an iron-framed window above. At this point double split doors, with glazed upper leaves formerly gave access to the kitchen from a small yard where we see the remains of a former well. At upper level where two small sections of render have fallen away the nature of the pargeting can be seen, and is actually a hard cement fixed to evenly-sawn softwood laths.

4.7 The extensions to the north are constructed of brickwork laid in Flemish bond, all now painted, the northern extension constructed in Fletton brick and of no interest, although it utilises the same window pattern.

4.8 The north façade presents a number of phases and has been extensively built out. We see the north gables of the north – south main range and the gable of the western range, with the internal angle between the two ranges infilled with a double-gabled construction, so that in the late 19th or early 20th century the impression was of four recessed gables. There is a large corbelled-out chimney between the two inner gables, where we see two upper windows. Subsequently the north side was built out with the lower extension, which brought the west range to the level of the east range, while the intermediate space was later spanned with a large, double-height glazed conservatory with a steeply-pitched roof and a secondary pitched roofed structure to accommodate a spiral staircase giving independent access to a bedroom.

4.9 In addition, a late 19th century stable range lay to the north of the house and is now linked to the house by an enclosed swimming pool.

4.10 After the removal of the render from the south and west elevations it was possible to inspect the timber-framing at first floor level in more detail, while at ground floor level the brickwork was exposed. Here we see red brick with some inclusions measuring 8¾" x 2¼" x 4¼" (222mm x 57mm x 108mm). The later application of hard cement has resulted in the loss of the fire-face of the brick when removed.

4.11 The west façade has primary-braced panelling with two downward braces descending from the corner posts, bisecting four or five studs, to the mid-rail (Plate 2). The corner posts are only partially visible but appear to be original. The mid-rail, however, is substantially lost and only survives in part at the north end, where it is very degraded. The brace is properly pegged at its head. Despite the primary bracing, we see structural pattern in the soffit of the tie-beam indicating a slightly different arrangement and suggesting this end wall has been substantially rebuilt. Mortices indicate a system of fairly robust studs, flanked by wattle poles or staves, no trace of which can be seen on the braces below. Most of the existing studs are simply notched into the tie-beam, leaving the earlier mortices now redundant and only in one or two cases do they actually survive.

4.12 The gable above the tie-beam is only partially visible although a wide collar jointed to principal rafters all appear to be original. The collar retains two lower peg-

holes clasping the stumps of original studs, below which a mixture of later insertions and modern reworking is visible. A central peg-hole lies to the upper side of the collar, although no stud survives.

4.13 In the same manner, the south façade retains timber-framing only at upper level and is divided into three bays; the chimney bay and two flanking bays. It is evident here that the west bay is structurally distinct from the adjoining areas, and although elements appear to be of the earlier form, the bay has apparently been substantially rebuilt.

4.14 In the west bay (Plate 3) the wall-plate is mostly visible, jointed into the post of the chimney bay to the east, apart from the area above the existing window. In the soffit of the wall-plate we see a pattern of mortices indicating a series of robust studs flanked by staves or wattle poles with a further intermediate wattle pole. This is a characteristic also seen on the opposite side, now internal, and noted below. Occasional original studs survive, pegged at the head, although very degraded at the base where the mid-rail has been lost with the bricking-in of the lower facade. The west section of the bay is primary-braced as on the west gable, along with a reconfiguring or insertion of secondary studs. Again we see the redundant wattle holes in the soffit of the wall-plate, confirming the secondary nature of the primary-bracing (Plate 4). Some of these timbers perhaps reuse members from the earlier framing.

4.15 A noteworthy historical survival is an original window aperture, implied in the location of the existing window. The soffit of the wall-plate is obscured and the original stud to the west of the window is lost, but the east stud retains a redundant mortice for a sill piece typically found on frames of this nature where windows occur (Plate 5).

4.16 The central, chimney bay is of narrower proportions than the outer bays. It is framed by two original posts pegged at the head, the east post of particularly robust proportions. The west post displays a redundant through-mortice at low level of indeterminate purpose, although it perhaps indicates the contemporary nature of the west bay. The remainder of the panel is obscured by the roof of the porch along with a window above, so that the soffit of the wall-plate is not visible. Elsewhere the timber appears to be of the later phase or modern.

4.17 The east bay (Plate 6) is divided from the chimney bay by the robust post noted above, while the wall-plate is continuous from the adjoining area, where we see the same pattern of redundant mortices for studs flanked by holes for wattle staves or poles. The east corner post is original, although the remainder of the timberwork is later, but which utilises the redundant stud mortices. This post displays a mortice for a tension brace which originally would have extended inside the common studs, as seen on the west post of the chimney bay. A further common feature of the two studs is the presence of the through-mortice at lower level. In this instance it perhaps indicates the building formerly extended further to the east. A further peg above lies towards the outer edge, but its purpose is unknown. In this bay the mid-rail survives to some extent, although very degraded and encased by brick in places. Little else is visible and the current studs are nailed to this member. A short section of timber lies immediately above, but its purpose is unclear. It may, perhaps be a simple bolstering piece.

4.18 Convention would suggest an original window aperture in this bay, in the position of the existing window to correspond with that in the west bay. However the flanking studs are lost and perhaps the only indication is a slightly wider spacing to the peg-holes above than elsewhere.

Interior

4.19 The interior has been comprehensively refurbished throughout with tiled or timber floors, with most features such as doors replaced to give a very modern appearance. The historic core of the building includes the chimney bay and the flanking two bays of the east – west range identified above, where we see elements of timber-framing visible and left exposed as decorative features, although this area has likewise been remodelled. The remaining areas of the house predominantly occupy the late 19th century additions. On this basis the analysis includes a brief description of the 19th century ranges but focuses on the areas of historic interest where the survival has been greater, and rooms ascribed numbers (Fig. 3) in order to clarify the text.

4.20 Due to the extent of refurbishment throughout the building we generally see plain re-plastered walls, with modern cornices and suspended ceilings set with recessed spot-lights and similar. For the most part, the windows are of robust timber with large chamfered mullions, with modern leaded lights and bronze or chrome handles of apparently 1930s – 50s date (though they may be more recent). However, exceptions within the 19th century additions include the east window of Room 1, where an 1860s iron-framed casement survives. This comprises outer fixed lights of twelve panes and a central casement of twelve panes. Despite the more historic nature of these windows the timber-frames and mullions are not contemporary, and these may perhaps have been brought in from elsewhere. In addition, the windows in Rooms 2 and 3 at first floor level also retain the same form of 19th century frames with leaded lights.

4.21 Room 4 lies to the north of the historic core and although most historic features have been removed, it does retain its chimney stack with a lintel comprising a reused timber with lap-dovetail mortices. A short section of the external frame of the historic core is visible on the south although the original form is difficult to establish. Two principal studs survive and a section of mid-rail with evenly-spaced peg-holes and various redundant mortices, the sole-plate latterly pierced to create a doorway.

4.22 The roof form of two of the later ranges was viewed. The roof of the long north – south range, now containing the principal entrance, was viewed from a hatch in Room 6. This is of softwood construction, all the timber of slender, even scantling comprising rafters couples with nailed-on collars. The purlins are robust and bolted at bladed scarf joints. Lath marks show this area was once ceiled to collar level, although is now obscured by a modern suspended ceiling. Everything is characteristic of the 19th century date established for the exterior.

4.23 The addition between the east and west ranges retains a roof of 19th century construction comprising plain silky softwood rafter couples rising to a ridgeboard.

Historic core

4.24 As noted above, the historic core of the building lies along the east – west range. The plan on Fig. 3 shows the extent of the original historic building. The layout of the house conformed to a classic 16th or 17th century lobby- or baffle-entry system which survives in outline. The original entrance lies on the south and was latterly enclosed with a porch which itself has now been converted to a small bay window, with the original doorway widened. Originally this would have entered a small lobby directly opposite the chimney stack, with a flanking hall/kitchen and parlour, or perhaps two rooms with a third room beyond to the east, as we saw slight traces that the building may have extended in this direction originally. The room to the west is now a dining area attached to the kitchen while the east cell has been reduced to a stair vestibule, the staircase piercing the northern half of the ceiling.

4.25 At low level the timberwork is not particularly coherent although the general layout can be discerned. The westernmost bay (Room 5) comprises a dining room (Plate 7), which is now open-plan with the adjoining kitchen (Room 6) situated in the 19th century addition. Little historic fabric is visible. A central post expresses the division between the two rooms, formerly an external wall, with a joist resting on corbelled out tiles at both ends. This is the only feature which is perhaps original, as it retains mortices for lower studwork. The ceilings of both rooms comprise large central joists with exposed common joists of waney mechanically-sawn oak, all of which are modern replacements with the principals crudely chamfered and ‘roughed up’ in an attempt to convey authenticity. Beyond the kitchen a number of 19th century pine doors survive, now stripped of their original paint.

4.26 The chimney bay lies in the centre, although at this level the stack has been rebuilt or clad in modern brick, retaining a rudimentary aperture on both sides. Neither is now used as a fireplace.

4.27 The east bay (Room 7) has a greater level of timber-framing exposed. This room retains fairly waney corner posts, the south-east member embedded in the wall, although the south mid-rail is well-preserved with an even pattern of peg-holes for upper studwork. Traces of lower peg-holes are visible. The north wall studwork can also be seen in Room 4. This side presents an outline of extremely close-spaced studs, as opposed to the wider spacing at upper level visible from the exterior, of such tight dimensions that the spaces between the studs are almost of the same width as the studs themselves (approximately 12¼" (310mm)). This framing is pierced by a small doorway, later blocked. An exposed timber ceiling comprises a central bridging joist with in-line commons on both sides. The bridging joist is chamfered on both sides, with a crude stop on the east and two wide stops on the west end. This timber is perhaps original although the common joists may not be so in every instance (Plate 8).

4.28 The upper floor follows a similar disposition, with the west room now used as a bedroom while the east comprises an open landing giving access to other areas of the house, both rooms being ceiled at collar level.

4.29 Much of the end gable is visible in the east bay (Room 8) expressed with corner-posts and tie-beam, while on the north side the external face of the former wall-plate is visible. The corner posts of the east gable swell to a jowl and preserve a thin downward tension brace to the mid-rail (Plate 9). There is a lateral mortice for a further downward brace on the corresponding corner. The tie-beam is well-preserved. It displays side-axing marks and retains peg-holes for regularly-spaced

upper and lower studs, although has been truncated at the south end to give access to the Victorian wing. The roof at this point preserves a slender and fairly straight wind-brace. The bay division posts to the chimney also have jowled principals and a well-preserved tie-beam, although here with few peg-holes visible. The chimney has been rebuilt, as seen on the floor below, but incorporates an 18th century cast-iron hob grate in a newly made aperture. The wall-plates, north and south, survive in remarkably good condition, that to the south with wide-spaced lower peg-holes and a similar arrangement to the north, where more fabric is exposed. The soffit preserves a pattern much as discerned to the exterior on the south although here more evident. We see a stud mortice flanked by holes likely for slender studs or wattle staves, with a third intermediate wattle stave hole. The spacing between two stud mortices is 24½" (630mm). This wall-plate originally continued across the chimney bay although has been truncated, and the ends shaped, to give access to the north extension.

4.30 The south side of the chimney bay is reached from the west bay (Room 9) and now encloses a walk-in closet. Fairly wide-spaced external studs are visible. Room 9 preserves some timber-framing although much is obscured. The west gable tie-beam is visible and on the east adjoining the chimney bay, the tie-beam and outer jowled posts frame the two doorways and a section of chimney stack. The principal posts retain mortices for lateral downward tension braces. Above tie-beam level ten studs are visible; the base of alternate studs pegged (Plate 10).

Roof structure

4.31 The rooms in both bays are ceiled to collar level but inspection of the roof void is possible from a high-set doorway in Room 8 giving access via the chimney bay. Here we see the chimney stack constructed of 18th or 19th century brick with some vitrified headers. The roof of the east bay and the chimney bay appears to be continuous, while the western bay is a distinct element. The east side, as noted, has residual wind-braces below the ceiling level, while the structure is of clasped side-purlin form supporting a waney, yet fairly robust purlin in each pitch with simple rafter couples rising to an apex with no ridgeboard. Some of the rafters have assembly marks, the Roman numerals VI, VII and VIII can be discerned with their corresponding members repeating the numbering with a tag and showing that these are original pairs. The purlins have deflected and have been built up to compensate.

4.32 At the bay division between the chimney bay and the east bay some nailed-on studs are visible below collar level, some of which are pegged, but not enough fabric is visible or accessible for further analysis.

4.33 The western purlins are staggered to those in the east bay but the same construction appears, with simple rafter couples riding over the backs of the purlins. The purlins here are, however particularly waney and clearly represent two halves of the same tree, while the rafters retain much bark in a mixture of oak and probably elm, all of mean quality and in most cases not properly squared. Like the east side, the purlins have deflected and been built up. A few of the oak rafters retain battens to show the original tiling of the roof.

Stable block

4.34 The late 19th century stable block now comprises a recreation room and recording studio. The building was formerly a stable of five or six bays which has been completely refurbished with modern windows and internal dressings. Only three original roof trusses now survive to date the building to the late 19th century. These each have a tension rod, housed with a nut in the soffit of the tie-beam, with raking struts riding to a single purlin in each pitch. The purlins are supported by cleats.

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Technical analysis shows that Down Green House is a mixture of 19th century and modern additions around a small, two-bay timber-framed house which was originally very humble. The internal timber-work of the ancient core is still visible, though the structure has undergone much modification and only detailed scrutiny can separate the old from the new or make sense of the existing arrangement. The house began as a two-bay lobby- or baffle-entry house, probably of 16th-century date, as the outer walls retain redundant mortices for a system of closed studding typical of this date. This was extended in the 19th century with a new north – south wing on the east side of the old house while the west side was extended laterally by two bays to form a U-shaped structure. The courtyard arising from these extensions was itself later infilled by a double-gabled range. All appear to be broadly contemporary as they share a number of features such as early iron-framed casement windows. These, with other features such as the form of the roof spaces suggest a date range of the 1830s to 1880s. Modern refurbishment has been comprehensive, with most original decorative features removed in these wings, leaving only ephemeral traces.

5.2 The historic core is now essentially a skeletal remnant, much modified by replacement timbers, buttressing and pierced through the floor of the former hall by a modern staircase. The existing ceiling joisting in the dining area is a modern replacement following the earlier pattern, while the adjoining exposed timber in the kitchen is a modern pastiche. Most of the original chimney stack has been refaced. No surviving decorative finishes such as doors or original windows survive, although the position of one at least may be suggested at upper level.

5.3 Removal of the render or pargeting allowed detailed analysis of on the south and west facades of the historic range, exposing much of the timber-framing at first floor level, which as noted has been heavily modified. Survival of the original frame here is limited to the corner posts and wall-plate, with a small number of intermediate studs all pegged at the head to the wall-plate. The original timbers which remain *in-situ* have been illustrated on Fig. 5. Most of the mid-rail has been lost, although fragments are visible in places, on the west gable and the east bay on the south side.

5.4 The pattern of original timber-framing can be generally discerned, of the close-studded form noted above, which suggests that the building was originally covered in wattle and daub. However, the pattern at upper level varied somewhat, contrasting the disciplined and regular arrangement of studwork at lower level (now only represented by redundant mortices) with wider spaced studs and intermediates or wattle poles above. This may indicate that in its original form the studwork was exposed at lower level, with pargeting above in a manner which may still be seen in

regions such as Essex and Hertfordshire. Inspection of the external timber-frame at upper level revealed a second phase of work, when the west gable end and part of the south elevation was reconfigured to a primary-braced system. This phase of work also saw the removal of most of the original studs in the eastern bays and their replacement. Conventionally, the nature of this later framing indicates a date in the later 17th or early 18th century.

5.5 The advice from SADC noted that attention should be paid to the location and authenticity of the pargeting and whether or not the areas of proposed repair comprise a modern copy of earlier work. A number of areas of pargeting were exposed for repair, and a good representative sample was inspected.

5.6 The 19th century wings are all rendered with hard cement which has been patterned with a basket-weave effect mimicking pargeting, but this material is not traditional. Furthermore, this render extends to the ground in a manner which is not generally found with traditional lime renders, which would be susceptible to water up-cast and run-off at lower levels on a building. Some of this modern render has itself been repaired crudely with scoring in imitation of the Victorian stamped patterning.

5.7 This leaves only the south elevation comprising the historic core of the house, together with the gable end on the west (the north and former east elevations now being internal) where traditional material could possibly be found. On these two remaining areas, the surface appears to be entirely rendered in the manner of the Victorian wings, with hard cement over machine-cut nailed laths, or even more modern expanded steel mesh. No lime plaster or render appears to survive. It is thus likely that all the existing 'pargeting' dates from a comprehensive refurbishment or expansion of the building in the 19th century. Moreover, this material has been painted with impermeable masonry paint. This creates additional problems with regard to replacement. Over the timber-framed historic areas, hard cement is incompatible and impermeable to the wetting and drying cycle on timber buildings, which will trap moisture in voids, leading to accelerated decay. Some of the decay exposed may have arisen as a result of its use in the past. Repair in this area should consider replacement with a softer, permeable lime-based material, though it is not necessary on the Victorian additions, which have an underlying brick base.

5.8 The building analysis was conducted with a view to the possibility of tree-ring dating the timbers. Most of the larger visible timbers such as tie-beams or corner posts appear to be fast-grown oak, displaying fewer than 30 rings. This is generally considered insufficient to secure a date.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Mr David Botley of Botley Byrne Chartered Surveyors for commissioning the report on behalf of their client Mr Martin Gore, and their client for funding the works. AS would also like to thank Ms Sara Freeguard for access to the property.

AS would also like to acknowledge the kind assistance of Briffa Phillips Architects (in particular Mr Tony Statham).

AS would like to acknowledge the assistance of the main contractor, Between Time Ltd (in particular Mr John Lloyd).

As would like to thank Mr Simon West of SADC for his input and advice.

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Thompson, I. 2002 *Wheathampstead & Harpenden: Extensive Urban Survey Project Assessment Report*. Hertfordshire County Council

Websites

English Heritage's Images of England;
<http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk>

APPENDIX 1

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET

Site name and address:	Down Green House, Harpenden Road Wheathampstead
County: Herts	District: St Albans
Village/Town: Wheathampstead	Parish: Wheathampstead
Planning application reference:	Planning Ref. 5/09/1235/LB
Client name/address/tel:	Martin Gore Esq
Nature of application:	Re-rendering and repair
Present land use:	Domestic dwelling
Size of application area:	Size of area investigated
NGR (8 figures):	TL 1657 1378
Site Code:	n/a
Site director/Organization:	Archaeological Solutions Ltd
Type of work:	Historic building recording
Date of work:	16 th October & 23 rd November 2009
Location of finds/Curating museum:	
Related SMR Nos:	Periods represented: - 16 th century and later
Relevant previous summaries/reports: -	
Summary of fieldwork results:	<p>In October/November 2009, Archaeological Solutions Ltd conducted a historic building appraisal at Down Green House, near Wheathampstead. The appraisal was undertaken after a request from the client in order to comply with a condition of listed building consent, including a programme of building recording followed by observation during the course of the repair works</p> <p>Technical analysis shows that Down Green House is a mixture of 19th century and modern additions around a small, two-bay timber-framed house. The internal timber-work of the ancient core is still visible, though the structure has undergone much modification. The house began as a two-bay lobby- or baffle-entry house, probably of 16th century date, as the outer walls retain redundant mortices for a system of closed studding typical of this date. This was extended in the 19th century with a new north – south wing on the east side of the old house while the west side was extended laterally by two bays to form a U-shaped structure. The courtyard arising from these extensions was itself later infilled by a double-gabled range. All appear to be broadly contemporary within a date range of the 1830s to 1880s.</p> <p>Inspection of the external render revealed a system of pargeting inconsistent with tradition, which comprised hard cement over machine-cut nailed laths or modern expanded steel mesh. The removal of the pargeting in the proposed areas of repair exposed the skeletal outline of the 16th century timber-framing, with most timber-work apparently representing a phase of repair and reconfiguring which occurred in the late 17th or early 18th century.</p>
Author of summary: T Collins	Date of Summary: Nov 2009

APPENDIX 3

BUILDING RECORDING ARCHIVE FORM

Site Details							
Site Name: Down Green House, Harpenden Road Wheathampstead					NGR: TL 1657 1378		
County: Hertfordshire				Museum Collecting Area: HALs			
Site Code: AS 1256				Project Number: 3350			
Date of Work: October 2009				Related Work:			
Brief/s				Specification/s Y			
Date		Present		Date		Present	
Advice letter 17.08.09		Yes		26.08.09		Yes	
Site Records (Description)							
Notes (11 sheets A4)							
Site Drawings (Give Details of Formats & Size)							
Drawn Plans & Sections: 3 sheets A3 drawing film							
Architect's Drawings: 3 sheets A3 print-outs - annotated							
Digital Drawings							
Printouts of Drawings			Printouts of Data			Digital Data	
In report						Digital photographs and drawings on CD	
Reports							
Report No		Report Type				Present	
3435		Historic building recording				Yes	
Site Photographs							
Black & White Contact Prints					Colour Slides		
Film No	Film Type	Negs	Negs Present	Contacts Present	Film No	Negs	Present
1	120mm	6-15	Yes	Yes	1	23-30	Yes
2	120mm	1-15	Yes	Yes			
3	120mm	1-5	Yes	Yes			
Photographic Location Plans Present? (Give Details)							
In report and separate printout in archive folder							
Digital Photographs (Give Details):							
Digital photography duplicates black and white photography. Index and selected plates printed in report. Separate printout of index included in archive folder and digitally on CD.							

PLATES



Plate 1 East façade of the building showing the entrance and gable at the south end, taken from the north-east (DP 10)



Plate 2 Timber-framing on the west gable at first floor level (historic range), taken from the north-west (DP 33)



Plate 3 Timber-framing of the west bay at upper level, taken from the south-west (DP 38)



Plate 4 Detail of later primary-brace and redundant wattle hole in the wall-plate of the west bay, taken from the south-east (DP 39)



Plate 5 Mortise for the sill piece of an original window in the west bay of the upper floor, taken from the south-west (DP 40)



Plate 6 Timber-framing of the east bay at upper level, taken from the south-west (DP 47)



Plate 7 Room 5 (historic core) now open-plan with Room 6, taken from the south (DP 41)



Plate 8 Exposed ceiling joists in Room 7, historic core, taken from the north-east (DP 12)



Plate 9 North-east side of Room 8 (historic core), taken from the south-west (DP 24)



Plate 10 East side of Room 9 (historic core) adjoining the chimney bay, taken from the west (DP 28)

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DP 1

East façade of the assessment building, taken from east



DP 2

Projecting bay at the east end of the south façade, taken from the south-west



DP 3

South façade of the assessment structure, taken from the south-east



DP 4

View of the assessment structure showing roof form, taken from the south-west



DP 5

West façade of the assessment building, taken from the west



DP 6

North end of the west façade, taken from the south-west



DP 7

North façade of the assessment structure, taken from the north-west



DP 8

View of the modern swimming pool addition, taken from the north-west



DP 9

East side of the former stable block, taken from the east



DP 10

East façade of the building showing the entrance and gable at the south end, taken from the north-east



DP 11

View of the entrance hall, taken from the north-west



DP 12

Exposed ceiling joists in Room 7, historic core, taken from the north-east



DP 13

North-west side of Room 7 (historic core), taken from the south-east



DP 14

Room 5 (historic core) now open-plan with Room 6, taken from the south



DP 15

View of the roof construction in the converted stable block, taken from the south



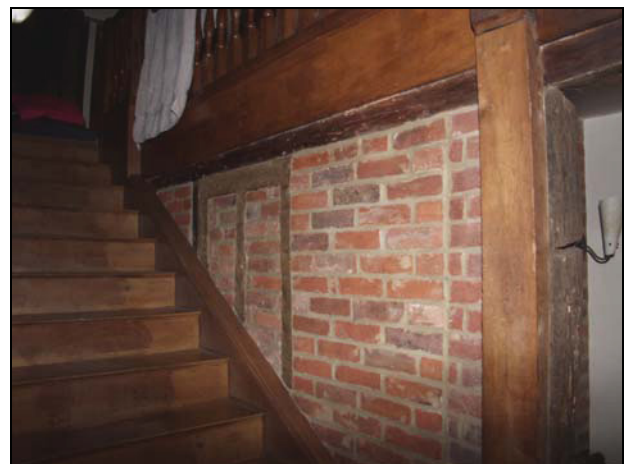
DP 16

Room 4 now open-plan with the conservatory showing the now freestanding chimney stack, taken from the south-west



DP 17

South wall of Room 4 showing formerly external wall of the historic range, taken from the north



DP 18

North wall of Room 7 (historic core) showing former doorway, now infilled, taken from the south-east



DP 19

View of the lobby and former entrance of the historic range on the south side of the chimney stack, taken from the east



DP 20

Exposed ceiling joists in Room 5 (historic core), taken from the south-east



DP 21

East side of Room 5 (historic core) showing the rebuilt / reworked chimney stack, taken from the north-west



DP 22

North side of Room 6, taken from the south



DP 23

West side of Room 8 (historic core) adjoining chimney bay, taken from the east



DP 24

North-east side of Room 8 (historic core), taken from the south-west



DP 25

Window on the north wall of Room 3, taken from the south-east



DP 26

External face of the north wall-plate of the historic core where it has been cut through, taken from the north-east



DP 27

West side of Room 9 (historic core), taken from the east



DP 28

East side of Room 9 (historic core) adjoining the chimney bay, taken from the west



DP 29

Formerly external wall of Room 9 (historic core), taken from the north



DP 30

Window on the north wall of Room 2, taken from the south-west



DP 31

Detail of removed render on the west gable end of the historic range, taken from the west



DP 32

Timber-framing on the west gable at first floor level (historic range), taken from the north-west



DP 33

Timber-framing on the west gable at first floor level (historic range), taken from the north-west



DP 34

Tenon at the base of a primary brace, west gable at first floor level (historic range), taken from the west



DP 35

Detail of the tie-beam on the west gable end of the historic range, taken from the north-west



DP 36

Detail of the tie-beam showing heads of two original posts, west gable of the historic range, taken from the west



DP 37

Detail of collar and truncated studs on the west gable of the historic range, taken from the north-west



DP 38

Timber-framing of the west bay at upper level, south side of the historic range, taken from the south-west



DP 39

Detail of later primary-brace and redundant wattle hole in the wall-plate of the west bay, south side of the historic range, taken from the south-east



DP 40

Mortise for the sill piece of an original window in the west bay of the upper floor, south side of the historic range, taken from the south-west



DP 41

Existing window in the west bay at upper level, south side of the historic range, taken from the south-east



DP 42

Junction between the west bay and the chimney bay at wall-plate level, south side of the historic range, taken from the south



DP 43

Detail of through mortice in the west post of the chimney bay at upper level, south side of the historic range, taken from the west



DP 44

East side of the chimney bay at upper level, south side of the historic range, taken from the south-west



DP 45

Robust post between the chimney bay and the east bay at upper level, south side of the historic range, taken from the south-east



DP 46

Timber-framing at upper level of the junction between the west bay and chimney bay, south side of the historic range, taken from the south



DP 47

Timber-framing of the east bay at upper level, south-side of the historic range, taken from the south-west



DP 48

Timber-framing of the east bay at upper level, south-side of the historic range, taken from the south-east



DP 49

Base of studs in the east bay at upper level showing fragmentary mid-rail, south side of the historic range, taken from the south-east



DP 50

Wall-plate of the east bay showing existing window and pegs in the wall-plate, south side of the historic range, taken from the south-east



DP 51

Head of the east corner post, south side of the historic range, taken from the south



DP 52

Detail of redundant mortice in the east corner post, south side of the historic range, taken from the south-east



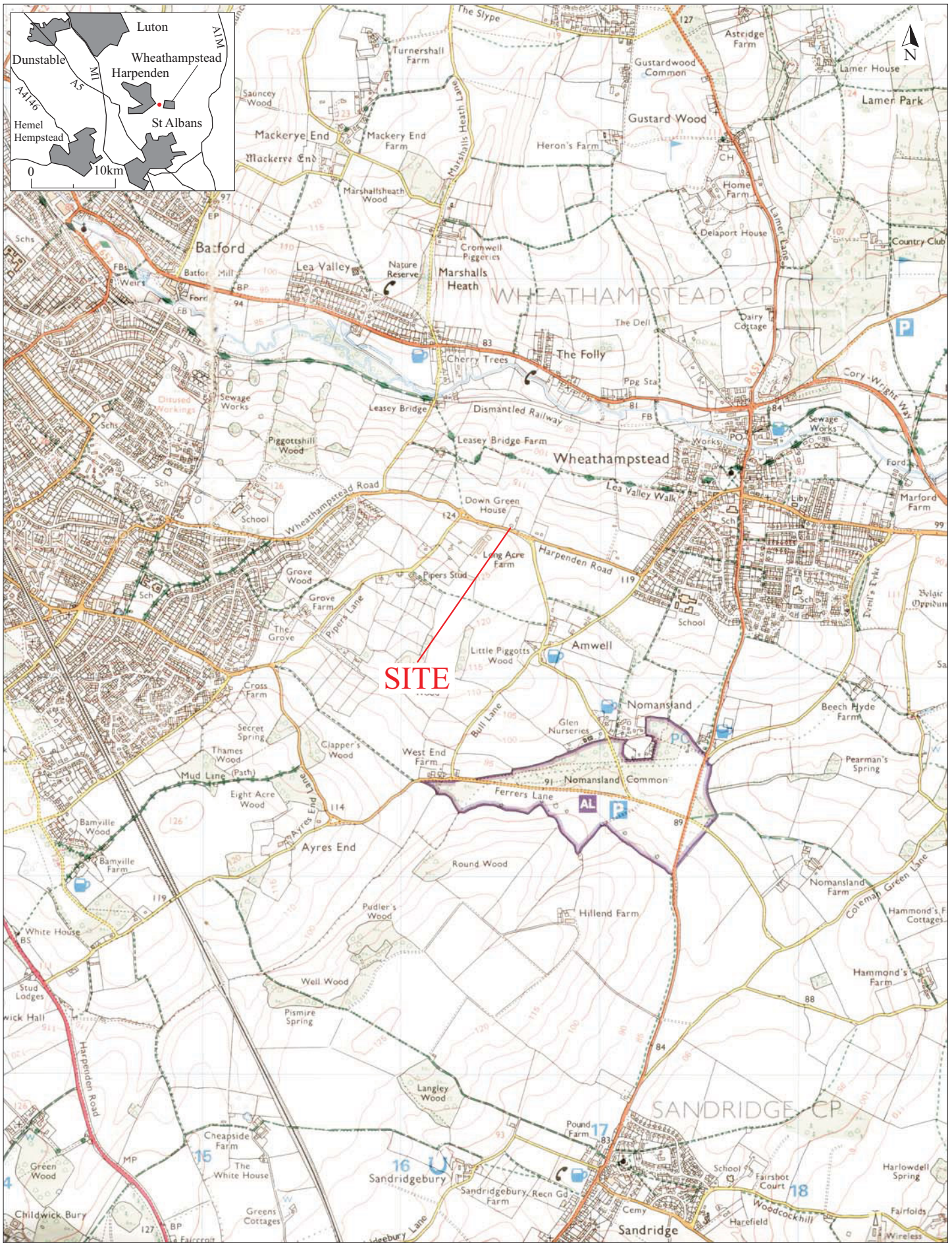
DP 53

Detail of brickwork at ground floor level in the east bay, south side of the historic range, taken from the south



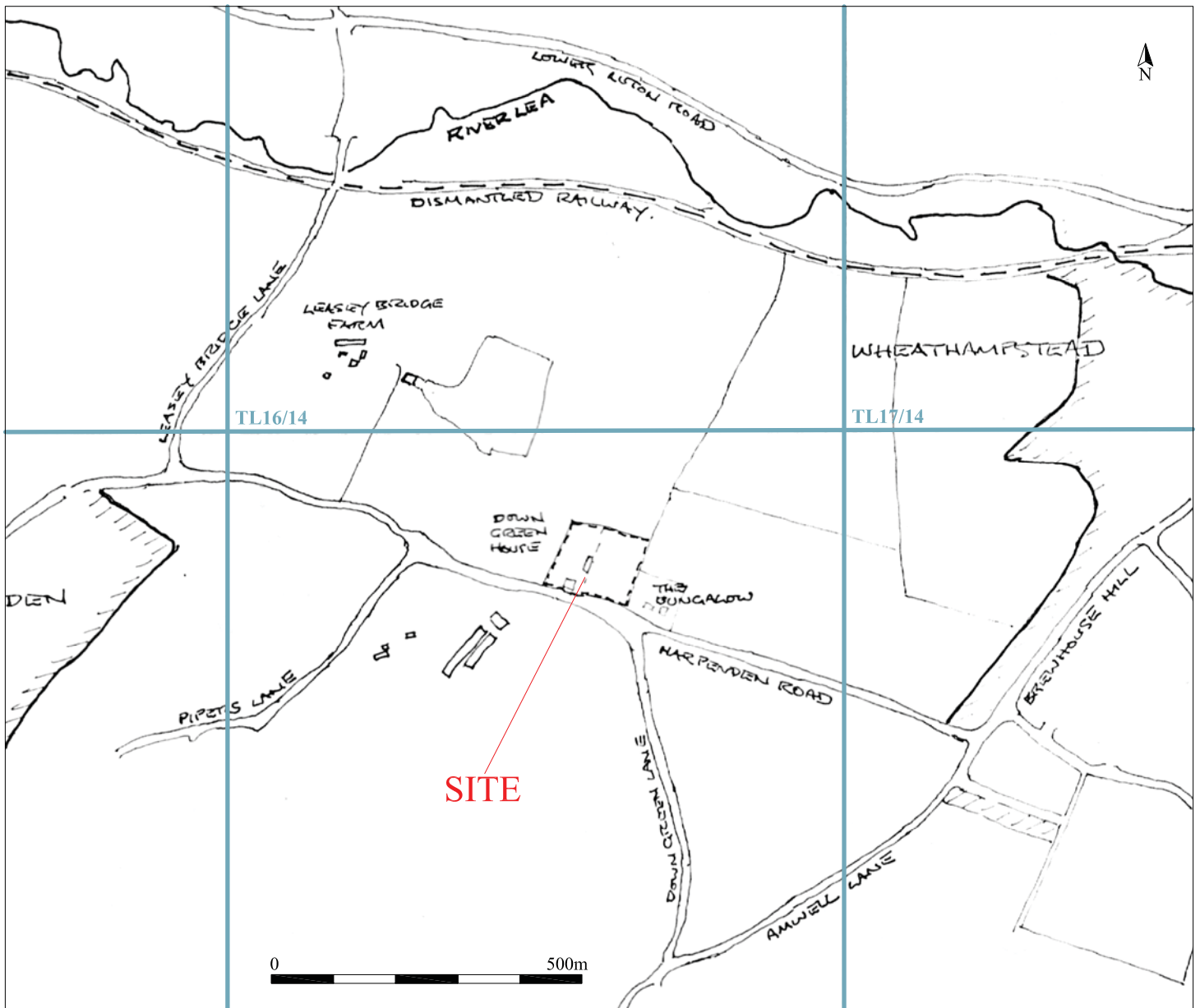
DP 54

Detail of the brickwork of the porch on the south side, taken from the south

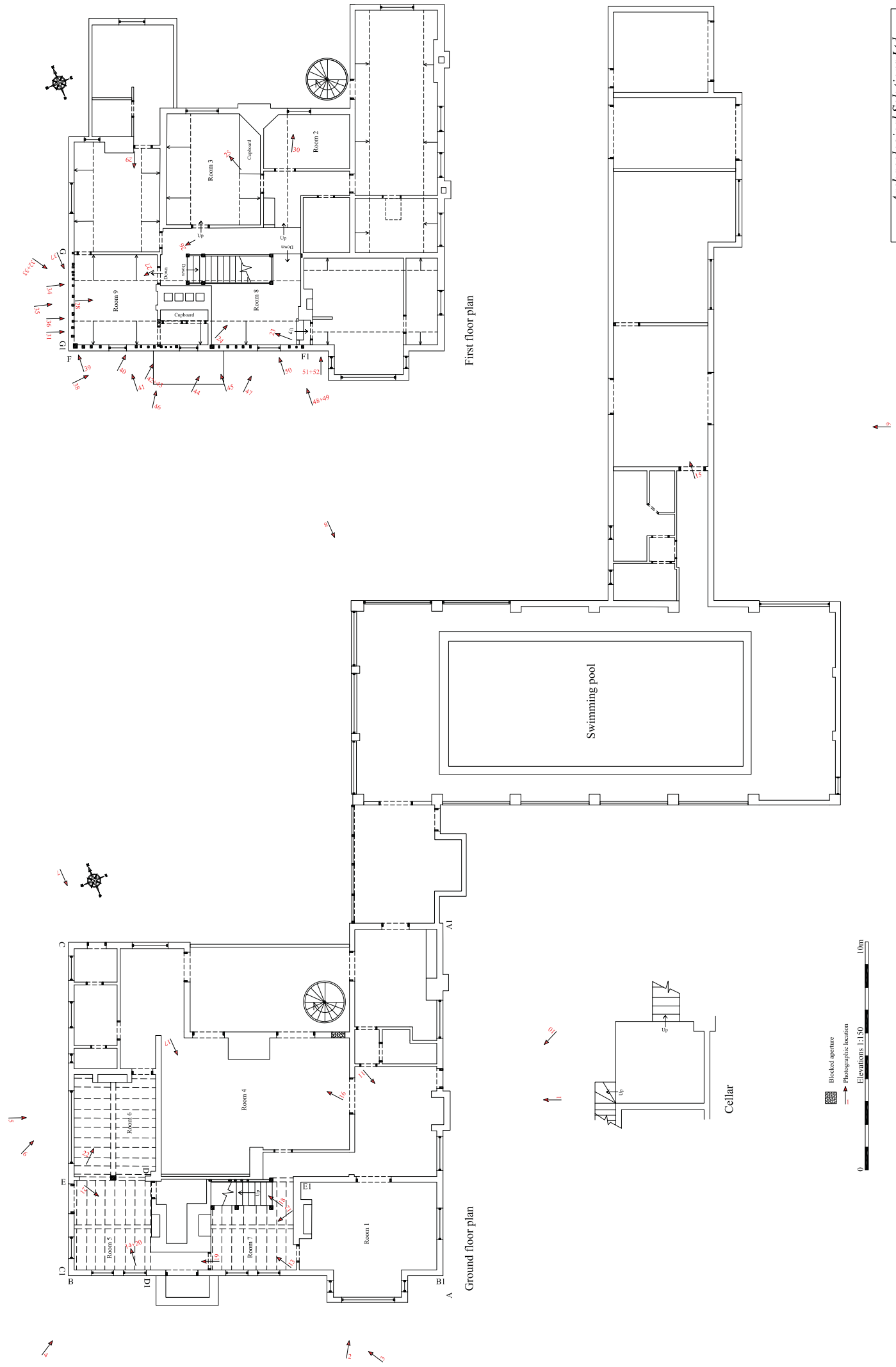


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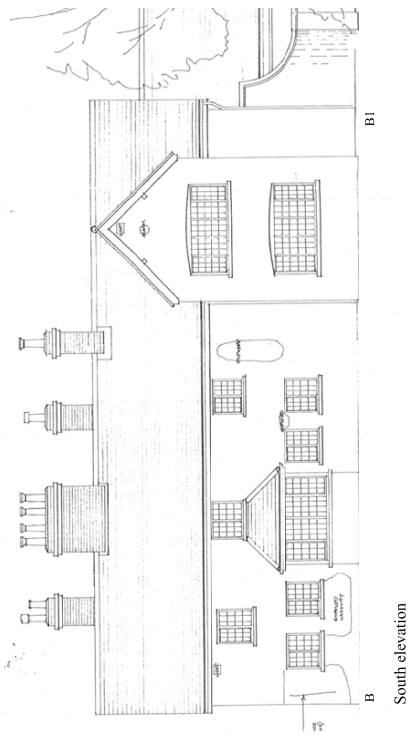
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Fig. 1 Site location plan
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4



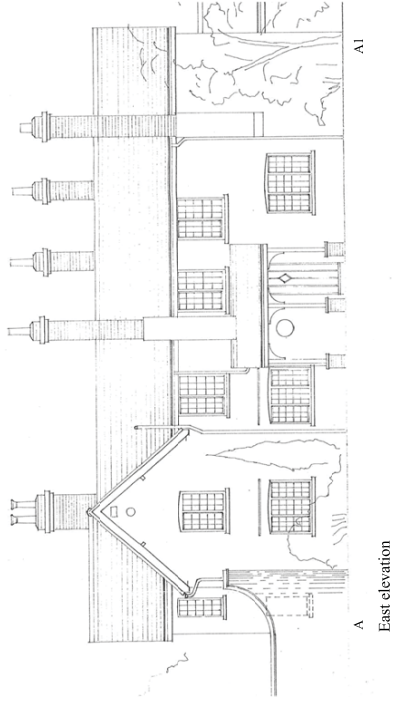
Archaeological Solutions Ltd
Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan
 Scale 1:10,000 at A4



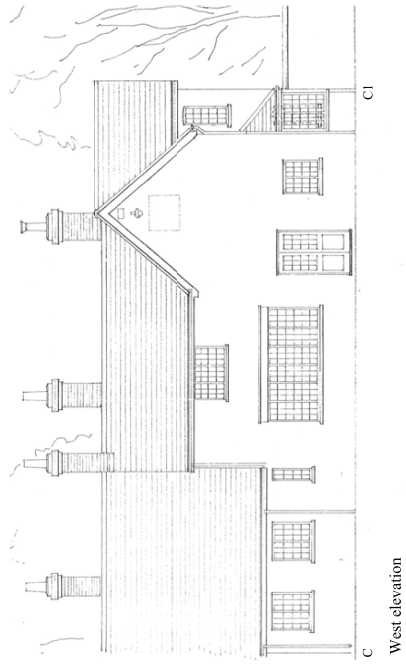
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Fig. 3 Floor plans
 Scale 1:150 at A3



South elevation



East elevation



West elevation

Elevations 1:150
0 10m

