

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Farm Cottage, 4A High Street,
Cumnor, Oxfordshire**

Building Recording

by Genni Elliott and Danielle Milbank

Site Code: HSC16/191

(SP 4613 0420)

**Farm Cottage, 4A High Street,
Cumnor, Oxfordshire**

**Building Recording
For Mr and Mrs Tyrrell-Williams**

by Genni Elliott and Danielle Milbank
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code HSC 16/191

November 2016

Summary

Site name: Farm Cottage, 4A High Street, Cumnor, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SP 4613 0420

Site activity: Building Recording

Date and duration of project: 6th – 20th October 2016

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site code: HSC 16/191

Summary of results: The wall to be removed was an original feature of the building, with a timber frame consisting of diagonal brace and vertical studs. The insertion of a square opening between the living room and kitchen had previously compromised the historical value of the wall by cutting the diagonal brace in two. Coupled with limited observations and the floor plans provided it would appear likely that the house was built in at least two phases with the west wing, in which this wall was located, being the extension to a two bay lobby entry cottage. A more thorough recording would reveal more information about the history of the house.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service or Record Office in due course.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 16.11.16 Steve Preston✓ 15.11.16

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by Genni Elliott and Danielle Milbank

Report 16/191

Introduction

This report documents the results of building recording at Farm Cottage, 4A High Street, Cumnor, Oxfordshire (SP 4613 0420) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr James Curl of Johnston Cave Associates (Architects), Henwood Studio, Wootton, Henwood Drive, Boars Hill, Oxford, OX 1 5JX on behalf of Mr and Mrs Tyrrell-Williams of Farm Cottage, 4A High Street, Cumnor, Oxfordshire.

Listed building consent (appln no. P16/V1412/LB) has been granted by Vale of White Horse District Council to recombine two semi-detached dwellings back into a single detached dwelling. This includes internal alterations and repairs to the historic fabric of the building. The consent is subject to a condition (4) which requires a programme of building recording prior to and during demolition in order that the historic fabric of the structures can be preserved by record. This report documents the results of the building survey.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the District's policies on the historic environment. The fieldwork was undertaken by Danielle Milbank on 6th and 20th October 2016 and the site code is HSC 16/191.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museums Service or Record Office and a copy sent to the National Monuments Record in due course.

Location, topography and geology

Farm Cottage is located on the north side of High Street, immediately to the west of its junction with the Oxford and Abingdon Roads. St Michael's Church is located opposite. Cumnor Old School and the post office are also located on the opposite side of the road. To the east and west are located other buildings fronting the High Street, whilst to the north are fields (Fig. 2). Farm Cottage lies at approximately 113.7m above Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology is recorded as being part of the Upper Corallian group, specifically sand (BGS 1982).

Historical Background

Farm Cottage is also known as *Manor Farmhouse* and is grade II listed. The listing entry reads:

CUMNOR HIGH STREET SP4605 (North side) 13/31 No.4 (Manor Farmhouse) GV II Farmhouse. Mid C18, with older origins. Coursed limestone rubble; gabled C20 tile roof; brick end and ridge stacks. L-plan with front left wing. 2-storey, 2-window-range front to right. Late C19 pediment hood over panelled door. Timber lintels over early C19 eight-pane sashes. Front left wing of 2 storeys; 2-window range with C20 casements. Interior not inspected but likely to be of interest.

The house is present on the Merton College Estate Map of 1808 as an L-shaped building.

Methodology

The building survey was carried out in accordance with guidelines set out by the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments for a level 3 record. The survey comprised a fully analytical record of the building's development, a comprehensive photographic survey, paying attention to the methods of construction, chronological development and alterations, and features of special interest, specifically in relation to the portion of historic fabric to be removed. The affected part of the building has been recorded in digital photographs, which are catalogued (Appendix 1).

Description

The building is 'L-shaped' in plan, constructed of roughly coursed stone rubble with stone quoins on the corners. The roof is of gable end type, covered in red clay tiles and with three brick chimneys. There are a number of different types of windows – casement style in the west wing and sash style (eight over eight) in the east wing with a combination of brick and stone quoins around them. In the gable end of the east wing was a gothic style arched window with a quoin detail of a different stone type, whilst the north elevation contains the same casement windows as those in the west wing. The main entrance is located in the centre of the east wing, covered with a small pediment hood. Additional doors are located on the north elevation. A lean-to extension and conservatory are present on the west elevation.

Currently the building consists of two separate units, divided at the junction of the 'L' shape creating a two-and-a-half-bay west wing and a two-bay east wing (Fig. 3). This divides into four rooms – two in each unit currently utilised as a kitchen and living room. The west wing also has the additional conservatory and lean-to extension functioning as a utility room. Each unit also contains a set of stairs giving access to the first and second floors. The first and second floors (not illustrated) are of similar layout but with an additional room on

the first floor of the west wing to accommodate a bathroom. A large fireplace is present with a later bread oven at the south end of the west wing. Within the east wing there is a large central chimney stack and an additional fireplace on the east wall. There was no access to the east wing, but plans were available.

The wall subject to this building recording is located on the ground floor of the west wing (Fig. 3), running across the entire width of the house, sub-dividing the existing kitchen and hallway from the living room. Only the section of wall between the kitchen and living room is to be removed. Prior to demolition the wall was recorded. On the kitchen side it was plastered over (on plasterboard) attached to the laths and hung with both base and wall kitchen cabinets (Pl. 1). Within the centre of the wall was a square opening (serving hatch) into the living room. On the living room side (Pl. 2) it was a plain plastered wall with a door into the living room from the hallway at the east end. Eleven joists stopped at the junction of the wall and ceiling. Immediately adjacent to the wall on the west side was an external door. The fifth beam from the west contains a number of empty (filled with the broken tenon) mortices that would once held vertical studs for a wall – reuse of the timber is perhaps more likely than the removal of an earlier wall. Other timbers also contained empty mortices and several had empty lap type joints, possibly to accommodate a large piece of furniture (Pl. 3).

Removal of the plasterboard revealed a timber frame constructed of a diagonal timber tennoned into a principal post at the top end and a sill plate at the bottom (Pls. 4-5). Vertical studs were tennoned into it both above and below. The diagonal brace had been cut in two to accommodate the square opening and a number of vertical studs removed. Above the principal post sat a beam, into which the upper studs were tennoned into. The beam was chamfered with a flat stop at either end (Pl. 6). The timbers appeared to be of oak though no analysis was undertaken. The kitchen floor is higher than that of the living room, and is the same height as the hallway floor.

Interpretation

The wall is likely to have been an original feature of the building, though it has been significantly hacked about, with the insertion of the square opening between the kitchen and living room. It is not possible to suggest a date for construction of the wall or the house, though it does afford a clue as to what else might be present behind the plaster covering the other walls. The serving hatch is modern.

From the floor plans and what was seen of the house it is thought that there are at least two building phases with the east wing likely to be the original house, consisting of a two bay lobby entry house, liable to date from anytime between 1600 and 1725, with the west wing being a later addition with different window styles.

Conclusion

The wall to be removed was an original feature of the building, most likely of oak construction and originally covered in lath and plaster. The insertion of a square opening between the living room and kitchen completely chopped the diagonal brace in two and removed two of the vertical studs. From what was seen of the rest of the house and from the floor plans provided it would appear likely that the house was built in at least two phases with the west wing, in which this wall was located being the extension to a two bay lobby entry cottage. A more thorough recording would reveal more information about the history of the house.

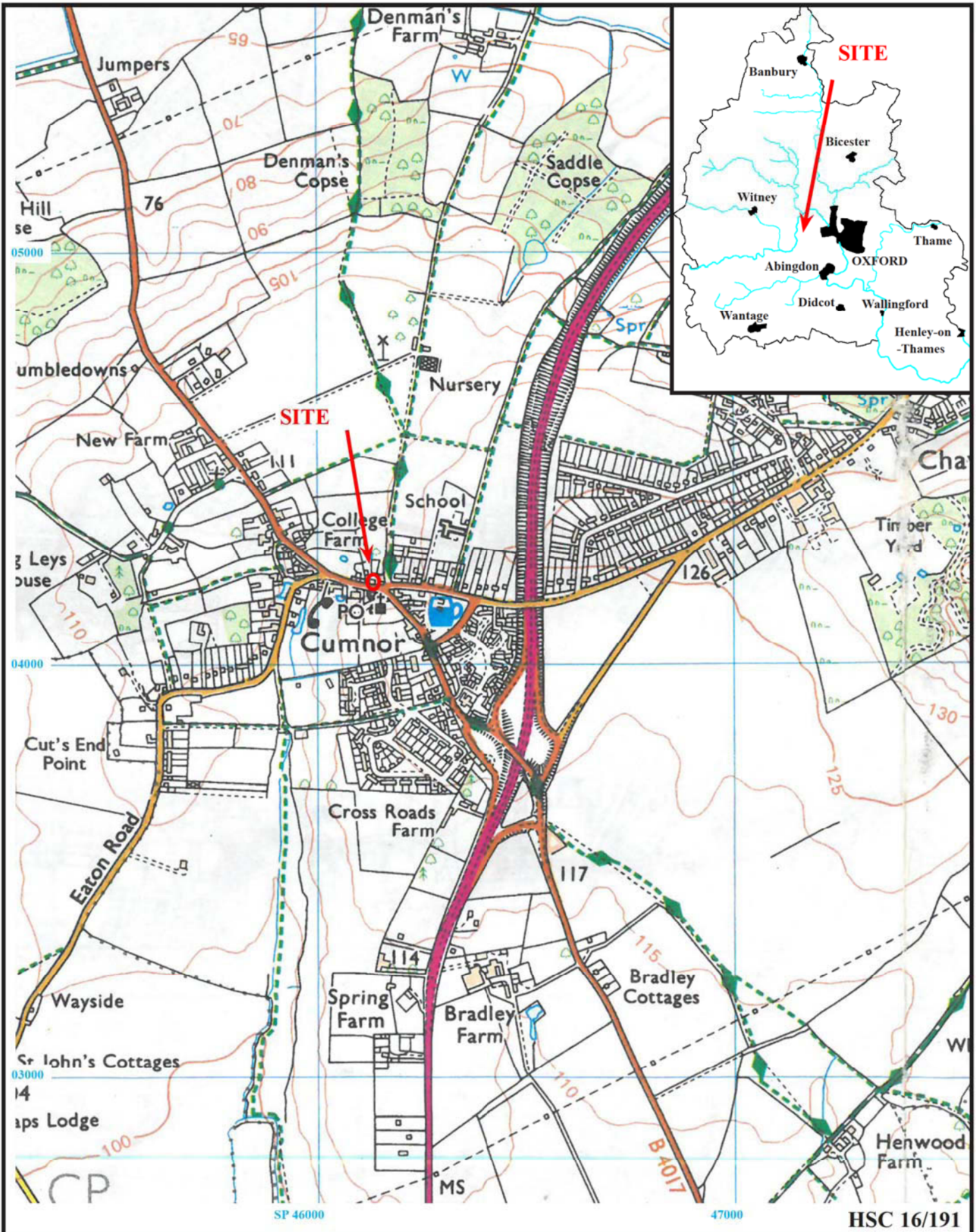
References

BGS, 1982, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 236, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
RCHME, 1996, *Recording Historic Buildings: a descriptive specification*, 3rd edn, Roy Comm Hist Monuments (England), London

APPENDIX 1: Photographic Catalogue

A. Digital

<i>Cat. No.</i>	<i>Scales</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Direction</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	1x2m, 1x0.3m	Room 1	S	Existing wall
2	1x2m, 1x0.3m	Room 1	S	Existing wall – close up [Pl. 1]
3	1x2m, 1x0.3m	Room 1	SE	Detail of exposed plasterboard and laths
4	1x2m, 1x0.3m	Room 1	SW	Corner detail
5	1x2m, 1x0.3m	Room 2	N	Existing wall [Pl. 2]
6	1x2m, 1x0.3m	Room 2	N	Top of wall showing joists (left)
7	1x0.3m	Room 2	N	Top of wall showing joists (right) [Pl. 3]
8	1x2m, 1x0.3m	Room 2	E	View along the wall
9	1x2m, 1x0.3m	Room 2	E	View along the joists
10	1x2m, 1x0.3m	Room 2	W	View along wall to external door
11	1x2m	Hall	S	Joists in doorway/hallway
12	-	Hall	SW	Detail of joists
13	1x2m	Hall	SW	View along length of joists
14	1x2m, 1x1m	Room 1	S	Exposed timbers – close up [Pl. 4]
15	1x2m, 1x1m	Room 1	S	Exposed timbers
16	-	Room 1	SE	Detail of diagonal brace
17	-	Room 1	SE	Beam chamfer stop (left)
18	-	Room 1	SW	Beam chamfer stop (right) [Pl. 6]
19	1x2m, 1x1m	Room 2	N	Exposed timbers from the living room [Pl. 5]
20	1x2m, 1x1m	Room 2	N	Exposed timbers from the living room (close up)
21	1x2m	Room 2	NW	Beam detail

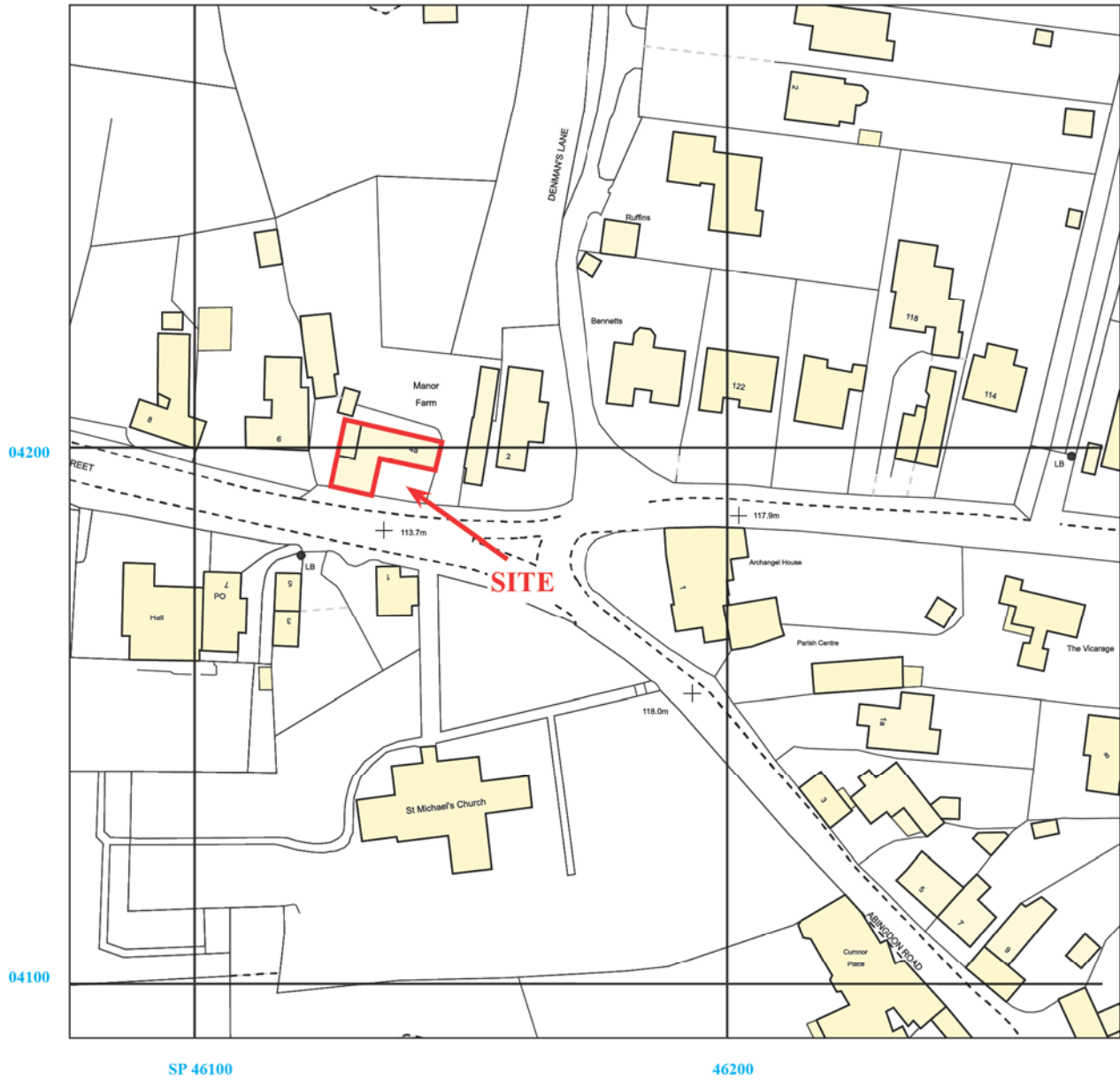


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Figure 1. Location of site within Cumnor and Oxfordshire

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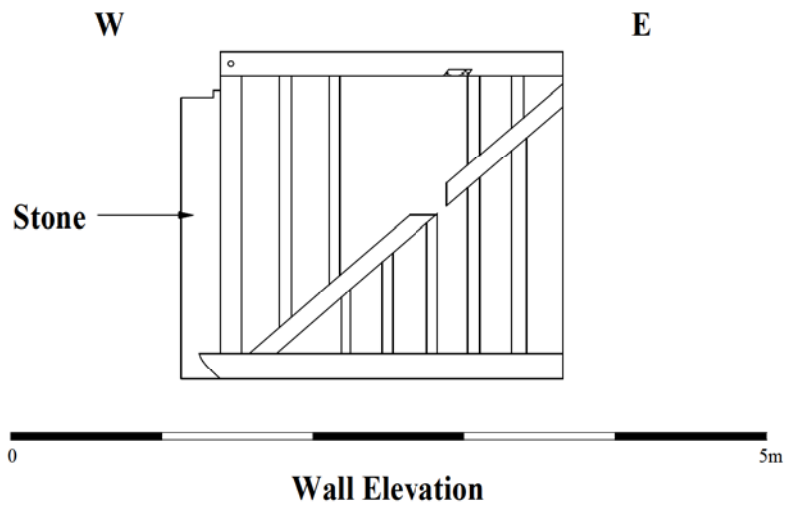
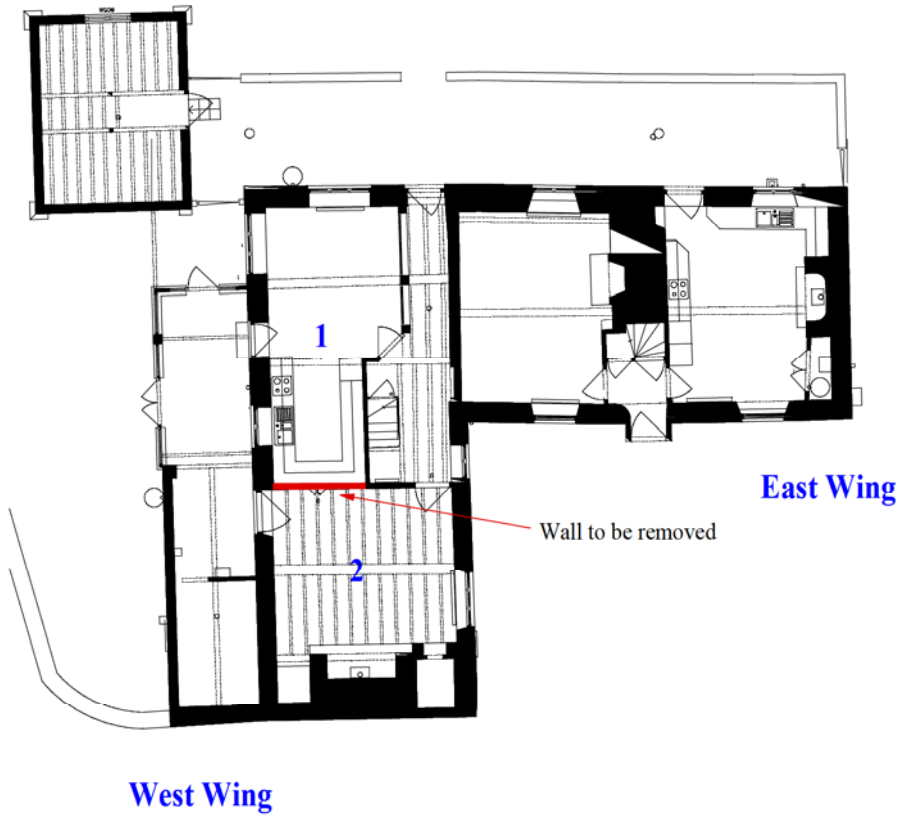
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off High Street.

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Figure 3. Ground Floor Plan and Wall Elevation



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Plate 1. Existing wall, looking South, Scales: 2m and 0.3m.



Plate 2. Existing wall, looking North, Scales: 2m and 0.3m.

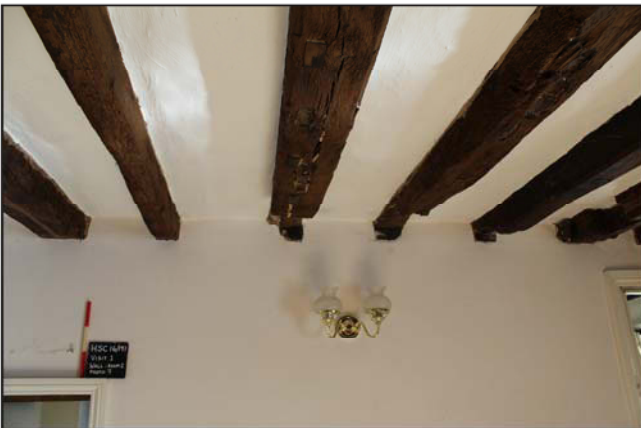


Plate 3. Top of the wall showing the joists, looking North, Scales: 0.3m.



Plate 4. Exposed timber wall looking South, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 5. Exposed timber wall, looking North, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 6. Beam chamfer stop, looking North.

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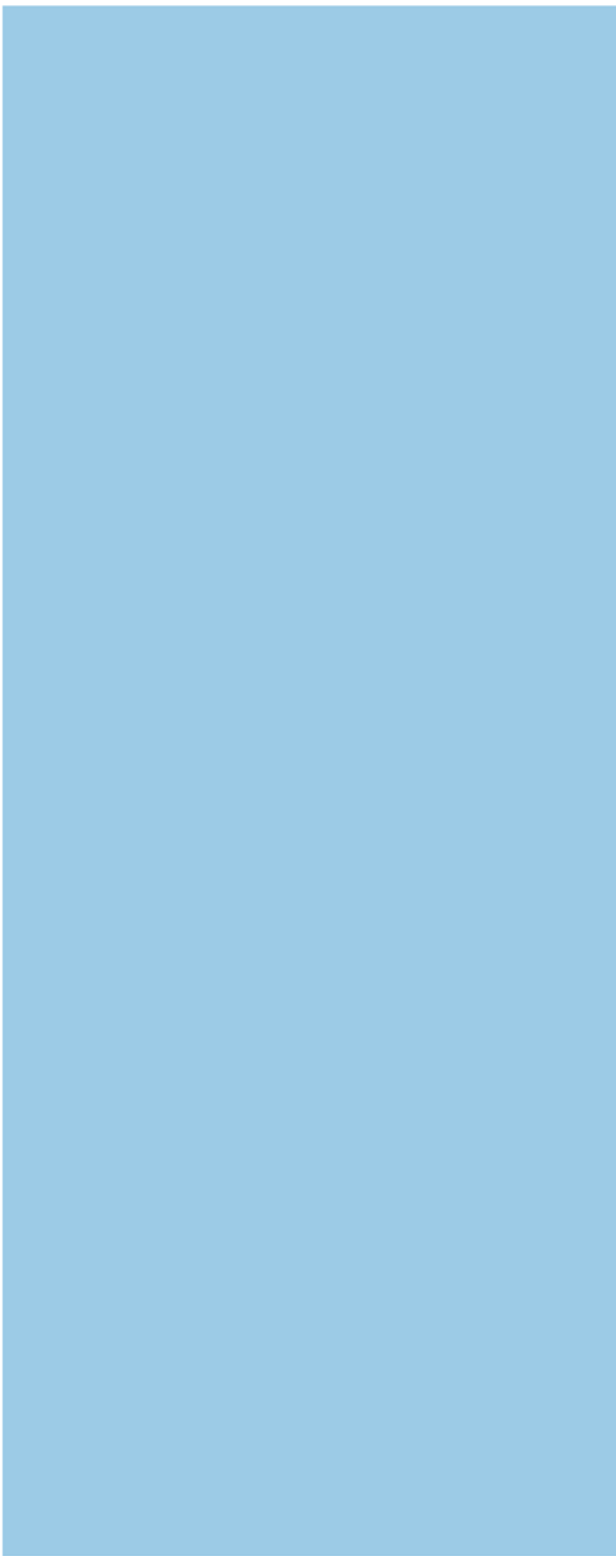
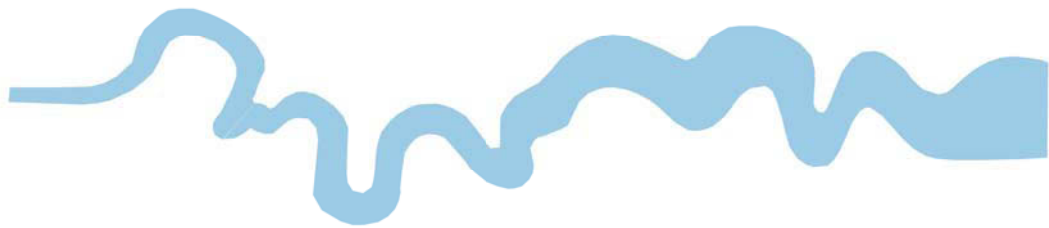
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Plates 1 - 6.

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TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late -----	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle -----	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early -----	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





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