

CRUCK BARN TO QUAKER MEETING HOUSE. A SMALL COTTAGE AT WOOD END, NASH.

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The cottage at Wood End, Nash dates to the 15th or 16th century and probably originated as a cruck-framed barn. In the 17th century the building was converted to a cottage and documentary evidence suggests that by the 19th century the building was in use as a Quaker Meeting House.

INTRODUCTION

An historic building recording project at Wood End Cottage, Wood End, Nash, was conducted in the spring of 2004 in advance of plans to dismantle, re-assemble and refurbish the building. The site is located on the southern periphery of the medieval village of Nash, known as Wood End, close to the ancient hunting forest of Whaddon Chase. The cottage is located within a small cluster of 15th to 17th century buildings and is itself Grade II listed as a small 17th century house.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The earliest reference to a cottage at Wood End is in a Will of 1728, in which William Hobcroft left a cottage at Wood End to his wife Mary and son William. It was then let to Henry Addington and in 1739 to Thomas Illing, a blacksmith. The 1831 Enclosure Award lists the site as cottages and gardens, copyhold of the 'Quakers Society'. The accompanying map shows the building as rectangular in plan, set back from the road with a further building fronting the road. There is no Tithe Award for the area and the Trade Directories mention no cottages at Wood End. By 1900 the second edition Ordnance Survey map shows that the site had undergone some alterations, with the removal of the building that fronted the road and a small addition to the west. The additional detail of the map shows that the cottage consisted of three adjoining units. The Inland Revenue Duties of Land Values from 1910, list the property as two cottages owned by Joseph Bryant of Beachampton Grove, Whaddon and occupied by Harry Knight and A.R.

Saunders. The building continued to be used as a house throughout the 20th century.

A 15TH TO 16TH CENTURY CRUCK BARN?

The building appears to date to the 15th to 16th century and now consists of a small one-and-a-half storey two bay range, with a 20th century porch added to the south. However, the evidence suggests it may have originally been a longer cruck barn. Surviving elements of the 15th to 16th century construction consist of heavy arched braced, open panel framing. The framing is heavily weathered and of stout but low quality oak. The use of second-rate but stout timbers indicates that the building may have been a barn at this time and redundant peg holes in the west end-post suggest that it originally continued to the west.

Redundant mortices in the central bay interval posts and a redundant double-sallied dovetail joint in the wall plate above, are thought to have been for a cruck spur tying the wall frame to a central cruck frame, now removed. Two further posts have cut rebates for earlier door sites, perhaps loading doors in the barn. Two posts have fair-face marks and one is scratched with a carpenter's assembly mark. Holes and grooves for earlier wattle and daub are evident on the framing and show that the building originally had wattle and daub walls.

17TH CENTURY DOMESTICATION

In the earlier 17th century a floor was added in the east of the building. This consists of a chamfered elm bridging-joist and similar common joists

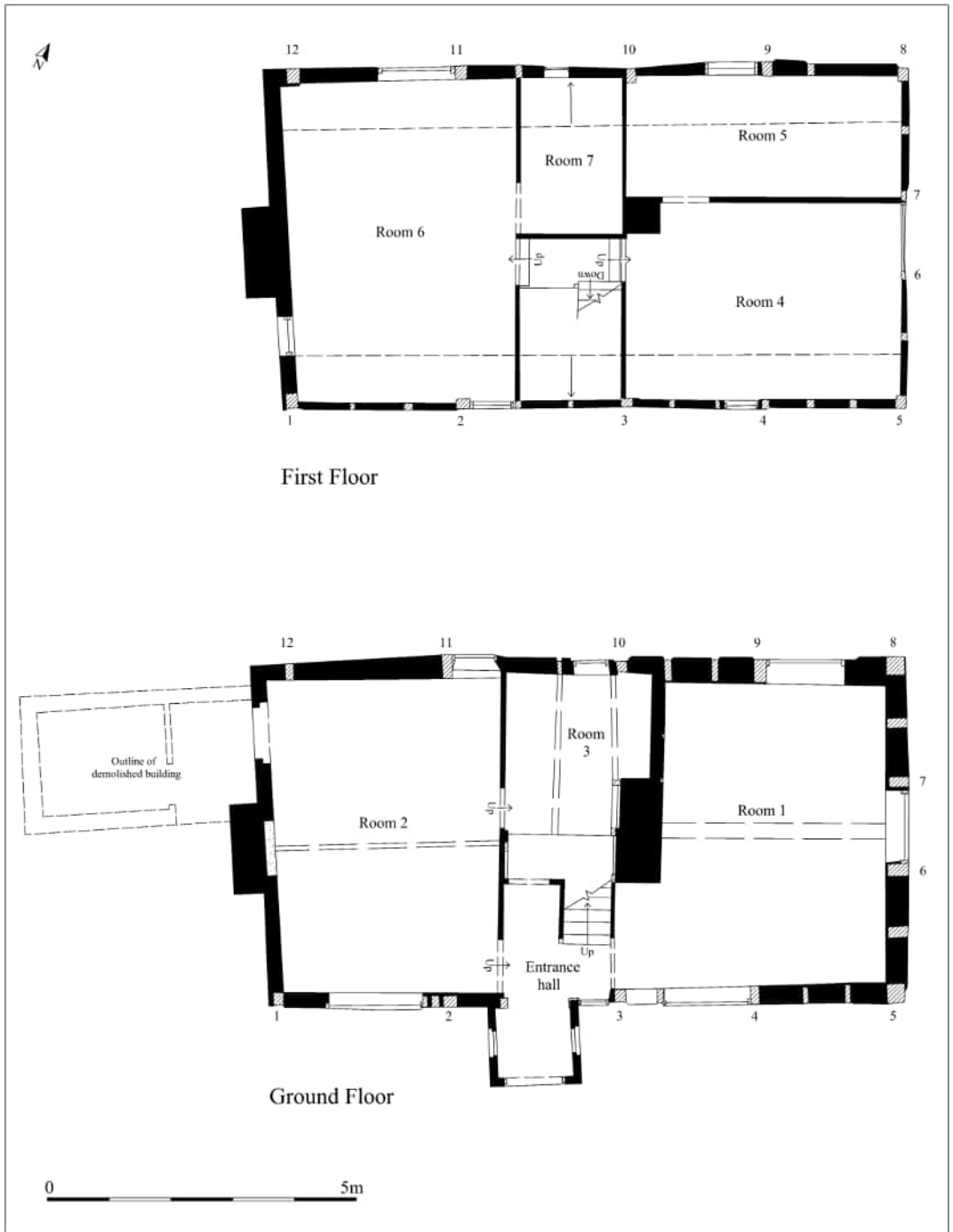


FIGURE 1 Cottage at Wood End, Nash: Floor Plans

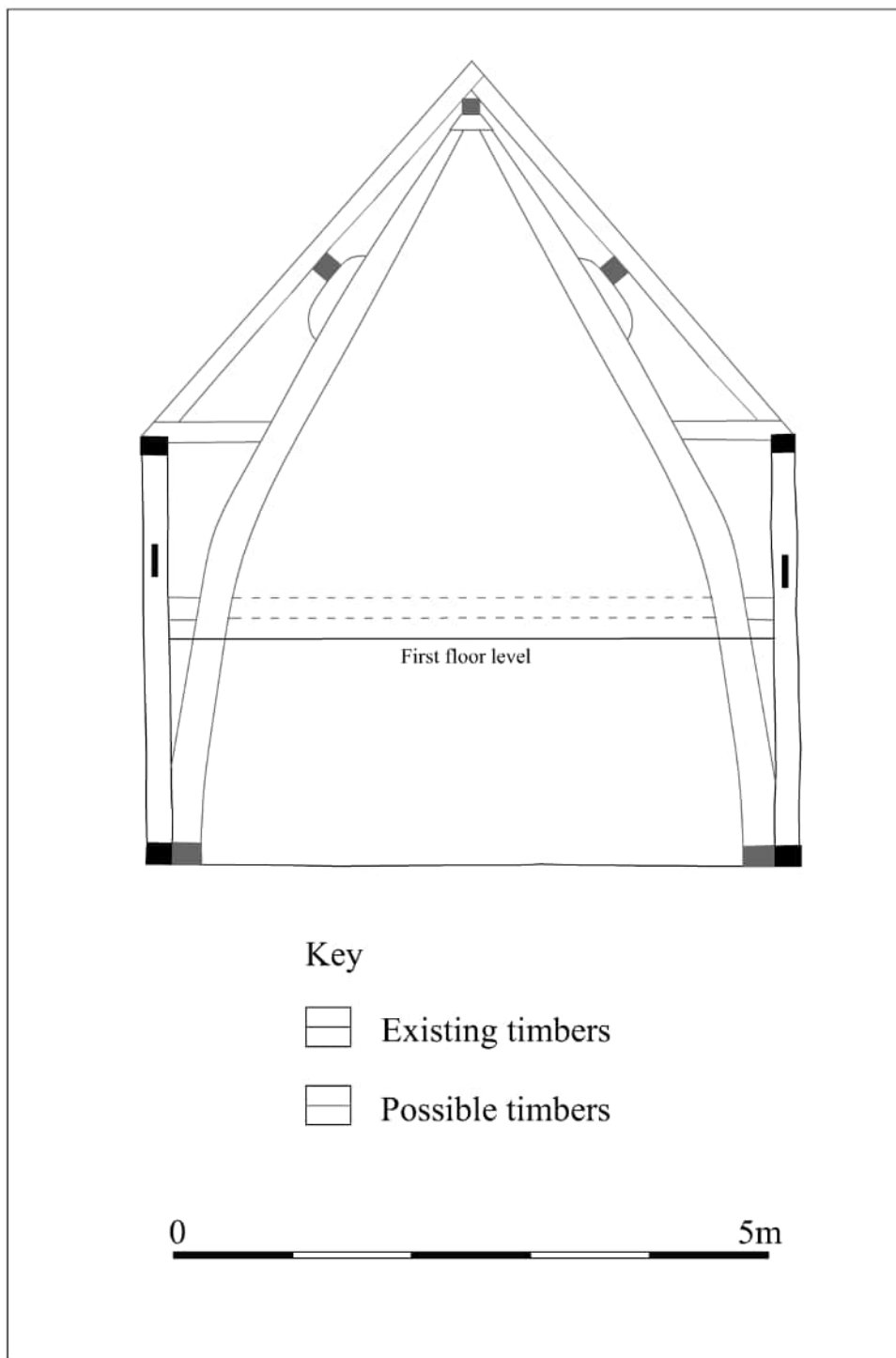


FIGURE 2 Reconstruction of Section

carrying oak floorboards above. Most of the joists have plain run-out chamfer stops but one has a long lambs-tongue chamfer stop, indicative of the early 17th century, and all appear to have been decorated with a red colourwash. The higher quality of construction may indicate that this end of the building took on a domestic character at this time. A straw and mud wall covering survives between later internal and external brick infilling and appears to also be a contemporary addition.

19TH CENTURY QUAKER MEETING HOUSE

By the early 19th century the historical evidence indicates that the building had already been reduced in size on the west side and appears to have been used as a Quaker Meeting House. The stair, a pine floor above the west of the building, lath and plaster on the east floor joists and some of the

internal walls date from this time. Some of the present brick in-filling was also done in this period and the re-roofing of the building in the 19th century suggests the cruck frame was removed during this phase of alteration. A brick floor revealed during underpinning works also appears to be contemporary.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The recording was directed by Melissa Wotherspoon on behalf of AS with Adrian Gibson MBE acting as consultant. The project was managed on behalf of AS by Jon Murray. The illustrations are by Amy Goldsmith.