

**43a WEST COMMON  
HARPENDEN  
HERTFORDSHIRE  
  
BUILDING SURVEY**

Project: WCH1470

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Produced for:  
Mr David Farley

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## Introduction

This project was undertaken prior to the demolition of a house at 43a West Common, Harpenden in advance of redevelopment. A request by a member of the public for statutory listing of the building was assessed by English Heritage who found that the building did not meet the criteria for listing twentieth century buildings.

Planning permission for redevelopment of the site includes a condition requiring a building survey. Albion Archaeology was commissioned Mr David Farley to undertake the survey. The schedule of works for the survey was agreed with St Albans District Council Conservation Officer.

The archaeological fieldwork and preparation of this report were undertaken by Mark Phillips (Project Officer). Photographic recording was undertaken by Nigel Macbeth. All Albion Archaeology projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

The report and archive will be deposited with Verulamium Museum, St Albans, under accession number WCH 09.

## Site location and description of the house

The house is situated at Ordnance Survey grid ref. TL 13450/13225 on the west side of Harpenden Common approximately 1km south of the centre of Harpenden, Hertfordshire.

The house is single storey structure with a T-shaped plan. The long axis is aligned north-south (31m long) and a 10m long cross-wing projects on the west side of the building. The main entrance to the house is on the east side. It opens into a hall area, separated from the living room by a glazed partition and door. The building has a softwood timber frame with cedar exterior cladding. The pitched roofs are covered in copper.

On the east side of the house there is garage. It is built of brick with a flat roof and connected to the house by a covered walk.

The house is situated in the eastern half of a garden that is approximately square with boundaries c.50m long.

## History of the building

The house was built between 1959 and 1962 in the western half of the garden of 43 West Common. It was the last building designed by the architect Anthony Williams ARIBA before he moved into component design and signage. The house was built for himself and his wife Eleanor who lived there for the rest of their lives.

In its original form the house was L-shaped, arranged along the eastern and northern sides of a terrace. In 1973 the house was extended by the addition of a northern wing, producing the T-shaped plan. The copper covering of the roofs was also added in 1973.

The building has features characteristic of the modernist domestic architecture of the time. It has a simple form with an unbroken roof-line and eaves, contrasted with the



vertical lines formed by glazed panels and doors. The central feature of the house is an open plan living space. Throughout the building, the rooms are open to roof-level. Natural materials are used extensively with cedar cladding externally. Inside, wood, cork, hessian and brick form contrasting surfaces and textures.

### **Description of Work Undertaken**

A photographic survey of the building was undertaken on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2008. The record produced consists of medium format monochrome photographs and digital images. These comprise fourteen monochrome and 130 colour digital images. Existing drawings held by St Albans District Council record the building in plan and elevation. The plan in this report (Figure 1) has been prepared from these drawings.

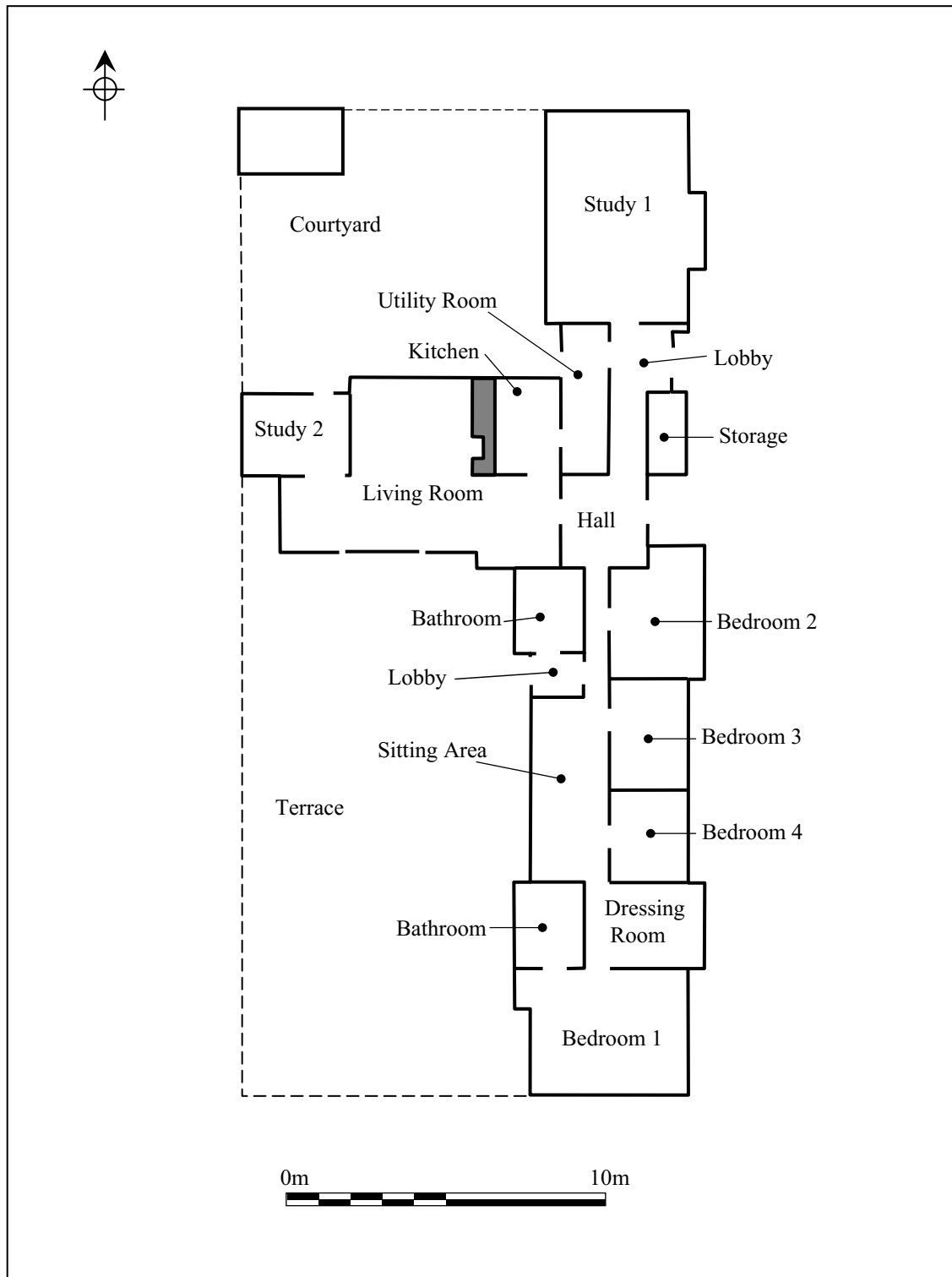


Figure 1: Outline plan



### **Note on the photographs**

In the following section a selection of photographs (plates 1 to 7) are included. These have been chosen to illustrate the appearance and construction details of the building internally and externally. At the end of the report all of the photographs taken are presented as thumbnail images along with an index describing each image. It should be noted that the colour and detail of the thumbnail images is affected by compression and reproduction and does not reflect the quality of the original images. The numbers and names of the rooms used in the description of the photographs are shown in figure 1. There are 130 individual digital images listed in the following index. Additional images created from the originals are marked by a suffix 'a'. These are images which have been modified from the original by either rotating the image or making it lighter.



Plate 1: Western side of building



Plate 2: North wing and cross wing from courtyard at north-west of building



Plate 3: Western end of cross wing with terrace area visible on the right





Plate 4: Living room, looking towards the east, north-east



Plate 5: Living room, looking towards the north-west



Plate 6: Bedroom 1, looking towards the north-west



Plate 7: Sitting area, looking towards the north, north-west





<b>Digital Image Index</b>	
<b>Image</b>	<b>Description</b>
	<b>Exterior</b>
001	North wing of building. Looking south-west.
002	North wing of building. Looking south-west.
003	North wing of building. Looking south.
004	North wing of building. Looking south-east.
005	Northern part of building. Central cross wing and courtyard. Looking east.
006	West end of central cross wing. Looking east.
007	Courtyard showing north wing and cross-wing. Looking south-east.
008	Courtyard showing cross wing. Looking south.
009	Courtyard showing cross wing. Looking south.
010	Courtyard showing conservatory. Looking north-west
011	Courtyard showing conservatory. Looking north-west
012	Courtyard, showing angle of north wing and cross wing. Looking south-east.
013	Courtyard, west side of north wing. Looking north-east.
014	Southern part of building. Cross wing and south wing. Looking east.
015	South-west corner of cross wing. Looking north-east.
016	South-west corner of cross wing. Looking north-east.
017	Terrace. South side of cross wing and west side of south wing. Looking north-east.
018	Terrace. South side of cross wing and west side of south wing. Looking north-east.
019	West side of south wing. Looking east.
020	West side of south wing. Looking north-east.
021	Southern part of building and terrace. Looking north-east.
022	Southern part of building and terrace. Looking north-east.
023	Southern part of building and terrace. Looking north.
024	Southern end of south wing. Looking north.
025	Southern end of south wing. Looking north-west.
026	Southern end of south wing. Looking north-west.
027	South side of building. Looking north-west.
028	South side of building. Looking north-west.
029	South wing. Looking west.
030	South wing. Looking west.
031	East side of building showing south wing and main entrance. Looking west.
032	East side of building showing south wing and main entrance. Looking west.
	<b>Interior</b>
033	Living room. Looking north-west.
034	Living room. Looking south-west.
035	Living room. Looking east.
035a	Living room. Looking east.
036	Living room, showing fireplace and triple doors onto terrace. Looking south-east.
037	Living room. Looking north.
037a	Living room. Looking north.
038	Living room, showing fireplace, storage and sliding hatch in south wall of adjoining kitchen and glass dividing wall with lobby area beyond. Looking north-east.
038a	Living room, showing fireplace, storage and sliding hatch in south wall of adjoining kitchen and glass dividing wall with lobby area beyond. Looking north-east
039	Living room: end wall and door to study 2. Looking west.
039a	Living room: end wall and door to study 2. Looking west
040	Living room: south wall and triple doors to terrace. Looking south-east.
040a	Living room: south wall and triple doors to terrace. Looking south-east.
041	Living room: south wall. Looking south-east.
042	Living room. Detail of window in west end wall. Looking south-west.
043	Living room. Window fitting in west end wall. Detail of window stay.
044	Living room. Window in west end wall. Detail of handle.
045	Study 2. Small study off living room. Looking south-east.



<b>Digital Image Index</b>	
	<b>Interior</b>
045a	Study 2. Small study off living room. Looking south-east.
046	Study 2. Small study off living room. Looking north-west.
046a	Study 2. Small study off living room. Looking north-west.
047	Study 2. Small study off living room. Detail: heating control.
048	Living room: bench in recess in south-east corner of room. Looking South-east.
049	Living room: bench in recess in south-east corner of room. Looking South-west.
079a	Living room: bench in recess in south-east corner of room. Looking South-west.
050	Living room: partition with kitchen, showing sliding doors above cupboards and drawers. Looking north-west.
050a	Living room: partition with kitchen, showing sliding doors above cupboards and drawers. Looking north-west.
051	Living room: partition with kitchen, showing sliding doors above cupboards and drawers. Looking north-west.
051a	Living room: partition with kitchen, showing sliding doors above cupboards and drawers. Looking north-west.
052	Kitchen: Looking west.
052a	Kitchen: Looking west.
053	Kitchen: Looking south-east.
053a	Kitchen: Looking south-east.
054	Kitchen: Looking north-east.
055	Kitchen: Looking east.
056	Utility room: showing built-in cupboards and shelves. Looking south.
057	Utility room: showing built-in cupboards. Looking north.
057a	Utility room: showing built-in cupboards. Looking north.
058	Utility room: north end with door to courtyard. Looking north-west.
059	Utility room: north end with door to lobby area. Looking north-east.
059a	Utility room: north end with door to lobby area. Looking north-east.
060	Lobby/corridor: door to utility room on right and outside to left. Looking south
060a	Lobby/corridor: door to utility room on right and outside to left. Looking south
061	Lobby/corridor: Built-in storage cupboards on left. Looking north.
061a	Lobby/corridor: Built-in storage cupboards on left. Looking north.
062	Study: Looking north-west.
062a	Study: Looking north-west.
063	Study: Looking north-east.
063a	Study: Looking north-east.
064	Study: Looking south, south-east.
064a	Study: Looking south, south-east.
065	Study: Looking south, south-west.
065a	Study: Looking south, south-west.
066	Study: Detail of window stay.
067	Study: Detail of window handle.
068	Entrance hall: Looking north-west.
068a	Entrance hall: Looking north-west.
069	Entrance hall: Looking east.
069a	Entrance hall: Looking east.
070	Entrance hall: Looking south, south-west.
070a	Entrance hall: Looking south, south-west.
071	Entrance hall: Looking south-west.
071a	Entrance hall: Looking south-west.
072	Corridor, looking south towards sitting area.
072a	Corridor, looking south towards sitting area.
073	Corridor, looking north towards entrance hall.
073a	Corridor, looking north towards entrance hall.
074	Bedroom 2: Looking north-east.
075	Bedroom 2: Looking north-west.
076	Bedroom 2: Looking north.



<b>Digital Image Index</b>	
	<b>Interior</b>
076a	Bedroom 2: Looking north.
077	Bathroom at north end of south wing: Looking north.
078	Bathroom at north end of south wing: Looking north-east.
079	Lobby off sitting area: Looking south-west.
080	Sitting area: Looking south.
081	Sitting area: Looking north.
082	Bedroom 3: Looking south-west.
082a	Bedroom 3: Looking south-west.
083	Bedroom 3: Looking south-east.
084	Bedroom 4: Looking south-east.
085	Bedroom 4: Looking south-west.
085a	Bedroom 4: Looking south-west.
086	Dressing room: Looking south-east.
086a	Dressing room: Looking south-east.
087	Dressing room: Looking north-east.
087a	Dressing room: Looking north-east.
088	Dressing room: Looking south-west.
089	Bedroom 1: Looking south-west.
090	Bedroom 1: Looking south-west.
091	Bedroom 1: Looking south-east.
092	Bedroom 1: Looking north-east.
092a	Bedroom 1: Looking north-east.
093	Bedroom 1: Looking south-east.
093a	Bedroom 1: Looking south-east.
094	Bedroom 1: Detail of light fitting on east side of room.
095	Bedroom 1: Detail of light fitting on east side of room.
095a	Bedroom 1: Detail of light fitting on east side of room.
096	Bedroom 1: Looking north-east.
097	En suite bathroom adjoining bedroom 1: Looking north-east.
098	En suite bathroom adjoining bedroom 1: Looking north-east.
099	En suite bathroom adjoining bedroom 1: Looking north-west.
100	Dressing room: Detail of wardrobe in south-east corner of room.
101	Bedroom 1: Detail of wardrobe at north end of room.
102	Living room: Looking south-east.
103	Living room: Looking south-east.
103a	Living room: Looking south-east.
104	Living room: Looking east.
105	Living room: Looking west.
105a	Living room: Looking west.
106	Living room: Partition with kitchen: Looking north.
106a	Living room: Partition with kitchen: Looking north.
107	Kitchen: Looking north-east.
107a	Kitchen: Looking north-east.
108	Kitchen: Looking south, south-west.
108a	Kitchen: Looking south, south-west.
	<b>Exterior</b>
109	Detail of copper roofing material on cross wing/living room roof.
110	Courtyard and part of north wing: Looking north-east.
111	Detail of wooden exterior cladding, west end of cross wing.
112	Detail of copper roofing material on cross wing/living room roof.
113	Detail of copper roofing material on cross wing/living room roof.
114	Detail of roofing showing valley between cross wing and south wing.
115	Detail: door in west side of south wing
116	Detail: window in west side of south wing; southern window of sitting area.



<b>Digital Image Index</b>	
	<b>Exterior</b>
117	Detail: corner on west side of south wing: exterior wall of south bathroom.
118	Detail of copper roofing material on cross wing/living room roof.
119	Detail of roofing showing valley between cross wing and south wing.
120	Cross wing: west end of cross wing. Looking north-east.
121	Terrace: angle of cross wing and south wing.
122	Terrace: west side of south wing.
123	Terrace: west side of south wing.
124	Cross wing: Looking north-east.
125	West end of cross wing and courtyard area: Looking north-east.
126	Detail of roofing material.
127	Detail of roofing material.
128	Detail of gable end on north-east corner of north wing.
129	Detail of gable end on north-east corner of north wing.
130	Panoramic image of entire west side of building: Looking north-west.

<b>Monochrome Image Index</b>	
<b>Image</b>	<b>Description</b>
01	North wing: looking south-west
02	Main entrance: looking south-west
03	South wing: looking north-west
04	South wing: Gable end: looking north, north-east
05	South wing and cross wing: looking north-east
06	South wing and cross wing: looking east, north-east
07	Cross wing: gable end: looking east
08	Courtyard: north side of cross wing: looking south
09	Courtyard: west side of north wing: looking east
10	North end of building: looking south east
11	North wing: gable end: looking south, south-west
12	Living room: under-exposed image
13	Living room: looking east, north-east
14	Living room: looking west, north-west
15	Living room: looking south-east





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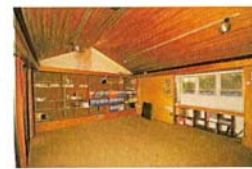
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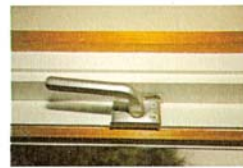
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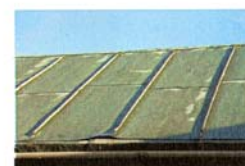
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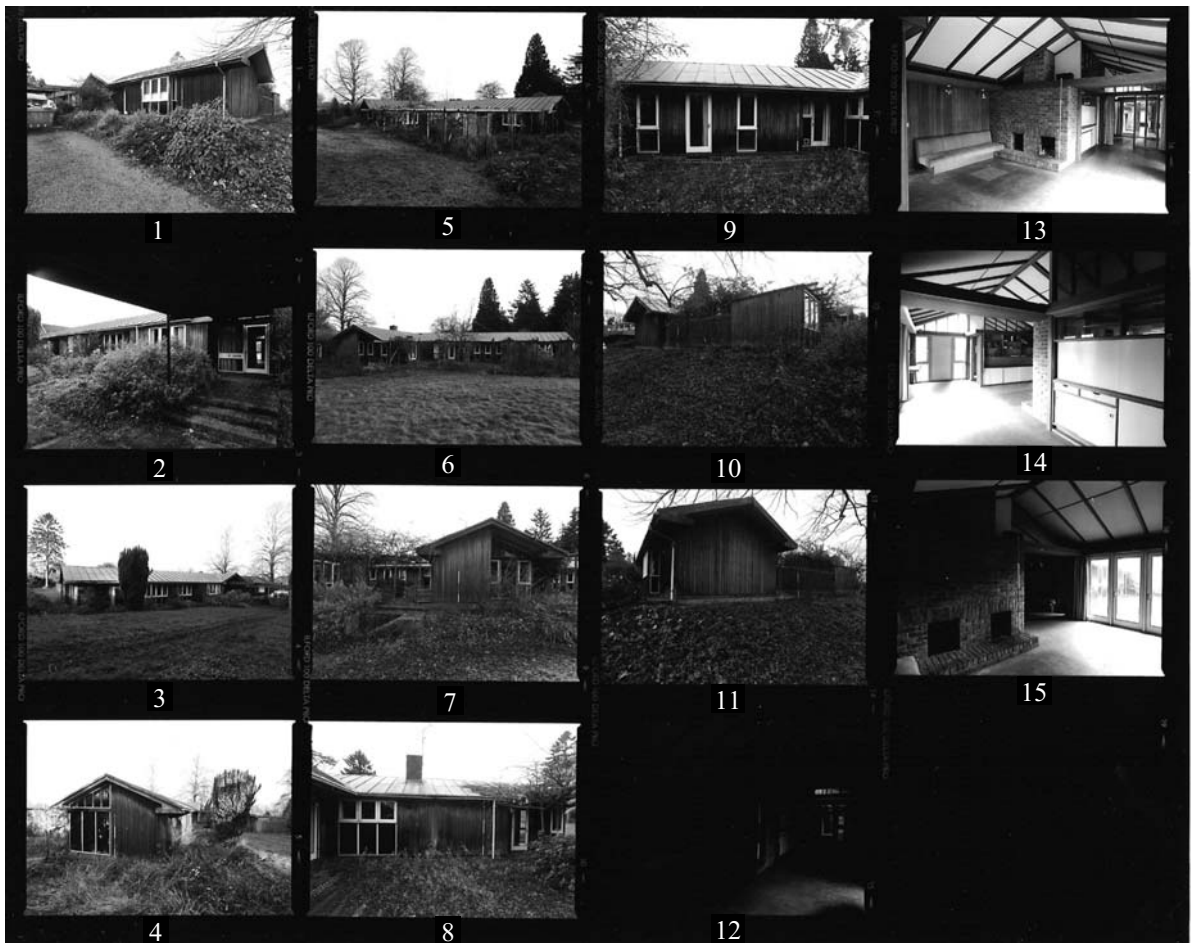
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