



Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological building assessment at 13 Bridge Street, Olney, Buckinghamshire



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March 2011



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QUALITY CONTROL

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OAS/S REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS	
Project title	Archaeological building assessment at 13 Bridge Street, Olney, Buckinghamshire
Short description	Building assessment and historic map consultation has shown that 13 Bridge Street has been in existence on virtually the same footprint since at least 1810. Architecturally its form is typical of early nineteenth-century domestic building although it has been significantly altered both internally and externally during the twentieth-century.
Project type	Assessment equating to EH Level II building record
Previous work	None
Future work	Unknown
Monument type and period	Listed Building–Grade II
PROJECT LOCATION	
County	Milton Keynes, formerly Buckinghamshire
Site address	13 Bridge Street, Olney, Buckinghamshire, MK46 4AB
Easting	SP 88905
Northing	51110
PROJECT CREATORS	
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology
Project brief originator	No written brief, verbal indication from Milton Keynes
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology
Director	Steve Parry
Project Manager	Joe Prentice
Sponsor or funding body	Mr and Mrs Scheepers
PROJECT DATE	
Start date	March 2011
End date	March 2011
BIBLIOGRAPHY	
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL BUILDING ASSESSMENT AT
13 BRIDGE STREET, OLNEY, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
MARCH 2011**

Abstract

Building assessment and historic map consultation has shown that 13 Bridge Street has been in existence on virtually the same footprint since at least 1810. Architecturally its form is typical of early nineteenth-century domestic building although it has been significantly altered both internally and externally during the twentieth-century.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Mr and Mrs Scheepers of 13 Bridge Street, Olney, are considering alterations to the property which lies on the west side of Bridge Street on the south side of the town of Olney, Buckinghamshire (NGR: SP 88905 51110, Fig 1). The house is Listed Grade II for group value. In pursuance of its status, Milton Keynes Council has asked that an archaeological building assessment be carried out prior to the Local Authority considering their application for Listed Buildings Consent should one be submitted. This is to better understand and appreciate the historic character of the property, both as a structure and in its historic landscape context.

This report constitutes such an assessment which was based upon a single site visit in March 2011, during which the author was granted complete access to all parts of the property. The scope of the assessment broadly equates to a Level 2 record as set down in the English Heritage procedural document *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good practice* (2006). An archive has been created, consisting of this report, annotated plans and elevations of the property as existing, supplied by Mr and Mrs Scheepers' architects 'g2energy'. These have been verified on site as accurate. A photographic archive was created comprising colour digital images and a selection of exterior black and white negatives with associated prints.

1.2 Property status

The property was Listed Grade II in 1952. Its description is listed in the English Heritage website 'Listed Buildings Online' at <http://lbonline.english-heritage.org.uk>:

IoE Number: 45679

Location: 13 BRIDGE STREET (west side)

OLNEY, MILTON KEYNES, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Photographer: Dr W A Cooper LRPS

Date Photographed: 21 August 1999

Date listed: 06 May 1983
Date of last amendment: 06 May 1983
Grade II

OLNEY BRIDGE STREET SP 8851 1/6 (west side) No 13GV

OLNEY BRIDGE STREET SP 8851 1/6 (west side) No 13 GV II Early C19 altered.
Stone slate roof, coped gable to south. Two-storey modern door in arch on left, sash window on right with wooden lintel, two sash windows to first floor. Included for group value. *LBS number 350947*

As will be seen this description, brief in terms of what it records, is limited in its detail. It records only the street frontage and does not include the interior or rear facade. The Level II grade is the most common, attributed to some 94 per cent of all listed buildings. It indicates that the building (or group of buildings if included for group value) is/are considered to be of special interest, warranting every effort being made to preserve them.

It is understood that the provisional proposal involves the erection of a single storey extension to the rear of the property.

2 RESEARCH FROM HISTORIC MAPS

A copy of the 1810 Ordnance Survey preparatory map is held in digital version by Northamptonshire Archaeology and the Milton Keynes Historic Environment Record was searched on-line but no entries, apart from a copy of the English Heritage Listing, was revealed. Other historic maps were consulted in the Local Studies Library at the Central Library, Milton Keynes. Whilst there are a small number of books containing photographs of the town of Olney, none show the property which is the subject of this report.

2.1 1810 Ordnance Survey – 2-inch Surveyor’s edition (Fig 2)

The scale of this map makes the identification of individual properties difficult when they are in such close proximity to one another in a built-up area such as Olney. Whilst it is clear that there is a row of buildings along the west side of Bridge Street it is not possible to distinguish the separate buildings. Therefore, it is not clear from this map whether or not the existing property was shown at this date.

2.2 1882 Ordnance Survey, 1st edition (Fig 3)

The map shows the property apparently divided into two parts, the northernmost section being part of the adjacent property to the north (number 15 Bridge Street). This confirms the comments of the present owners who also understood that this part of the building

was at one time part of that property. The building to the south (number 11) appears to have occupied the footprint on which it remains today although what can be seen now is in fact a modern re-build after that property fell down. It was re-built in its current form in 1983 (pers comm Mrs Scheepers).

Subsequent Ordnance Survey maps (1900, 1925 and 1965, not illustrated) show the same footprint although outbuildings to the rear appear and disappear over this period.

3 METHODOLOGY

The property was investigated for architectural and historically notable aspects which were photographed digitally and using Black and White print for archive purposes, the two producing a total of 70 + images. They were all generated using Nikon SLR equipment with dedicated lenses of 18-55mm and 17-35mm wide-angle capabilities.

In the absence of certainty in terms of past room uses or attributes the rooms on each floor are known simply by a number and their current use as defined on the architects plan.

Although strictly an assessment, the standard of recording equates to Level II as defined by English Heritage in their procedural document *Recording historic buildings: a descriptive specification* (2006). All rooms were accessed apart from the attic.

4 BUILDING ASSESSMENT

The present owners have lived in the property only since the latter part of 2010 and have made no alterations to the property so far. The house has been previously modernised and there is little historic fabric visible internally. The provisional proposals are to add a single storey extension to the rear of the building.

4.1 The exterior, east facade (Figs 4 and 5)

The east facade faces onto Bridge Street, the main road into the town from the south. The houses lining this road are predominantly built of limestone and range in date from the late seventeenth- to twentieth centuries of various sizes and architectural styles. Number 13 is a two bay, two storey, building built of coursed limestone with occasional brick dressings (Fig 5, Plate 1). It has been built against the south elevation of the building immediately to the north which has well defined and finely dressed quoins at the south-east corner. The roof is of blue, probably Welsh, slate. There is a single door and window on the ground floor and two windows to the first floor. Each of the windows is of the same configuration, eight over eight sashes, that on the ground floor set beneath an oak lintel whilst the first floor windows are set immediately beneath the eaves, presumably the lintels there are formed by the wall plate. The sash frames appear to be

relatively modern replacements and are not horned. The sills of all of the windows are of modern clay nib tiles painted white.

The front door is set back from the pavement within a square recess or open-fronted porch (Fig 4). This porch has a flat lintel formed of stone and appears to be entirely modern, as is the section of walling to either side and above it, presumably being re-built at the same time that the adjoining properties to the south were re-built following their collapse. On the south side of the porch are two modern built-in cupboards.

Although the entire front of the house has Virginia Creeper growing over it, at the time of year when the assessment was made, this vine was not yet in leaf and it was possible to see that there had previously been a doorway to the north of the present door, only the northern jamb of which survived (Fig 5). This is visible as a faint vertical scar in the stonework with a short section of brickwork towards the top. The lintel and southern jamb had been lost when that section of wall was re-built, and this opening was clearly a doorway and not a window since the right-hand jamb can be seen at almost pavement level.

The upper section of wall of the house has probably been raised; the evidence for this can most clearly be seen on the northern side of the east facade where the top section at the north side is built of red brick directly over the south wall of the building to the north (Plate 1).

4.2 The exterior, west facade (Figs 4 and 5)

The rear of the house is similarly of two bays and two storeys but narrower, since the building tapers in plan towards the west (Fig 4). The west elevation is entirely of brick, now painted a cream colour; the lower portion of the wall is rendered (Fig 5, Plate 2). The ground floor has a pair of French doors and two single pane casement windows (set within a single frame), both fitted within modern timber frames with sealed unit double glazed panels of modern date. Both the French doors and the kitchen window are set beneath concrete lintels. The kitchen window appears to be a replacement of another window since vertical scars can be seen where the original opening was at one time wider, which probably explains the thickness of the lintel which would have had to span the much wider opening (Plate 3). The sill of this earlier window cannot be seen since the lower portion of the wall has been rendered.

At first floor level there are two further double casement windows, similar to the ground floor example, the only difference being that the northern one is larger than the southern. Both are modern timber frames with sealed unit double glazing, that to the south with patterned glass since it lights the bathroom (Plate 2). Both are set immediately beneath the eaves and their lintels are most likely formed from the wall plate.

Part of the south elevation is visible obliquely from a shared access alleyway. This elevation reveals that the lower part of the wall has been entirely re-built recently, probably as a result of the adjoining property to the south falling down in the early 1980s (Plate 4). The level of the lower portion of re-build matches exactly with the height of the lintel above the kitchen window on the west elevation indicating that this was probably carried out at the same time. The south wall is buttressed on the north side of the alleyway, again presumably as a result of the collapse of the former cottage.

The rainwater goods are either plastic or galvanised metal, there appears to be no cast iron work.

4.3 The interior (Fig 4)

The interior is fully furnished and decorated so that few details of the structure could be seen, however, a detailed plan of the walls and their thickness has been prepared by the clients architect. As a result of the complete re-furbishment of the interior no photographs were taken since all of the walls which would be affected by the proposed alterations are modern plastered surfaces, or in the case of the kitchen, largely covered modern cupboards and wall units. Tapping on the walls revealed which ones are solid (either brick or stone) and which are most likely stud and plaster, though it was not possible to determine whether the latter were of lath and plaster or modern plasterboard over the studwork.

The plan of the ground floor indicates that there have been considerable changes with the south end in particular having an unorthodox layout with internal walls at angles to the exterior. Since it is difficult to determine the exact nature and date of those changes, the most obvious explanation is that this side of the building was affected by the loss of the building to the south and has been re-built. Stud and plaster walls are indicated on figure 4. The thick, stone, north-south aligned spine wall to the west of the stairs appears to be an original feature. This seems to be the only original internal wall. There are two fireplaces against the north wall of each downstairs room; that in the front (east) room is built of brick since the inner faces of the fire opening have been exposed. The rear fireplace opening is entirely plastered. All floors are either carpeted or tiled (in the kitchen) and appear to be concrete.

On the first floor the configuration is similar although all of the internal walls appear to be of studwork. There are exposed timber (pine) beams at ceiling height in the bedrooms, two of which bear paper labels, only one of which can be clearly seen, nailed to the north face of the beam in the front master bedroom (Fig 4). It has a hand-written pencil date, name and address on it which can only partly be deciphered (Plate 5). It appears to read:

November 4

Mr Thos Farnham

106 ----- (two indecipherable words)

City Road

London

There is also a vertical line of writing along the left hand side of the label which is unclear but appears to be another name, *Mr Wilsons*, although this is not absolutely certain.

It is uncertain why this label is nailed to the beam, especially with what is clearly a London address written on it. Though it is possible that the timber came from there, this seems most unlikely since it is hardly an unusual type of wood and it is unlikely that timber would be sourced from so far away. An internet search reveals a Mr Thomas Farnham living at 106, City Road in a 'Supplement to the London Gazette, February 27, 1863'. His occupation is listed as Esquire. Whether this is the same Mr Farnham, and if

so, why his name and address are written on a label attached to a beam in a small house in Olney is unclear. The current owners are keen to retain the label *in situ*.

4.4 The setting

The property on the north side of number 13 displays a currently un-fenestrated, predominantly stone, south facing elevation on the north side of the present paved area to the immediate rear of Number 13 (Plate 6). This elevation retains evidence of previous changes, including a blocked doorway and window as well as an indication that the eaves level has been raised by brickwork. This wall, being part of the adjoining property, would not be structurally affected by any additions to the present house.

To the south, the boundary between the present house and the adjoining, re-built property is a shared passageway at ground floor level and the only section of the two buildings which share a wall is at first floor level at the Bridge Street side (Fig 5, south elevation). Although the east (street) elevation is of limestone (see report cover photo, left-hand building with arched doorways), the rear of the property is entirely of red brick, either bare or rendered, and the roofing is a mixture of slate and concrete tiles (Plate 7). An integral projecting single storey rear wing is separated by a passageway on the south side of a timber boundary fence. The entire fabric of the building to the south is modern, having been built in 1983.

To the immediate rear of number 13 is a paved area which is separated from a lawned garden by a full-width flight of two paved steps. The garden is entirely enclosed by modern timber panel fencing.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Number 13 Bridge Street, although apparently shown on maps since 1810, has undergone extensive alterations both externally and internally. The main street frontage has been raised and partly re-built and although the windows are of sash configuration it is not thought that they are original.

The front door and the recessed porch in which it is positioned is a modern insertion, probably dating to the 1980s, it includes in-built storage cupboards on the south side. There is evidence for an earlier, more centrally placed doorway on this elevation and although the date at which it was altered is uncertain it is possible that the re-positioning of the door relates to the collapse and re-building of the cottages to the immediate south.

The rear elevation is built entirely of brick much of which, although now painted, appears to be twentieth-century in date. It contains all modern openings fitted with modern double-glazed doors and windows with concrete lintels. The lower portion of this wall is rendered. The lower half of the visible south elevation is a modern re-build, and it is possible that the remainder concealed by the party wall with the adjoining property is also modern.

Internally there appears to be little original fabric with most of the internal dividing walls of stud and plasterwork. Only one wall is demonstrably of stone and the two chimney

stacks appear to be entirely of red brick. The rear internal wall is entirely plastered over brickwork or obscured by modern kitchen cupboards.

Section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that "*In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses*". Whilst it is not the role of the author of this report to comment on planning issues the reason for the commissioning of this building assessment has been to establish the historic significance of those areas of the building which might be affected by the proposed alterations and it is the opinion of the author that any such alteration would not significantly affect any features of special architectural or historic interest, nor would it affect the setting which has previously been compromised by the erection of a substantial structure to the immediate south which is substantially larger both in height and plan than the present proposals. The proposed extension would not be visible from the adjoining property on the north side since there are no windows in that elevation. The street frontage of the property, the one described in the English Heritage listing, would not be affected by any alterations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are extended to the owners, Mr and Mrs Scheepers for allowing full access to both the exterior and interior of the house during the site assessment and also to g2design for the use of their plans as a basis for the drawings in this report.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

E H 2006 *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good practice*, English Heritage

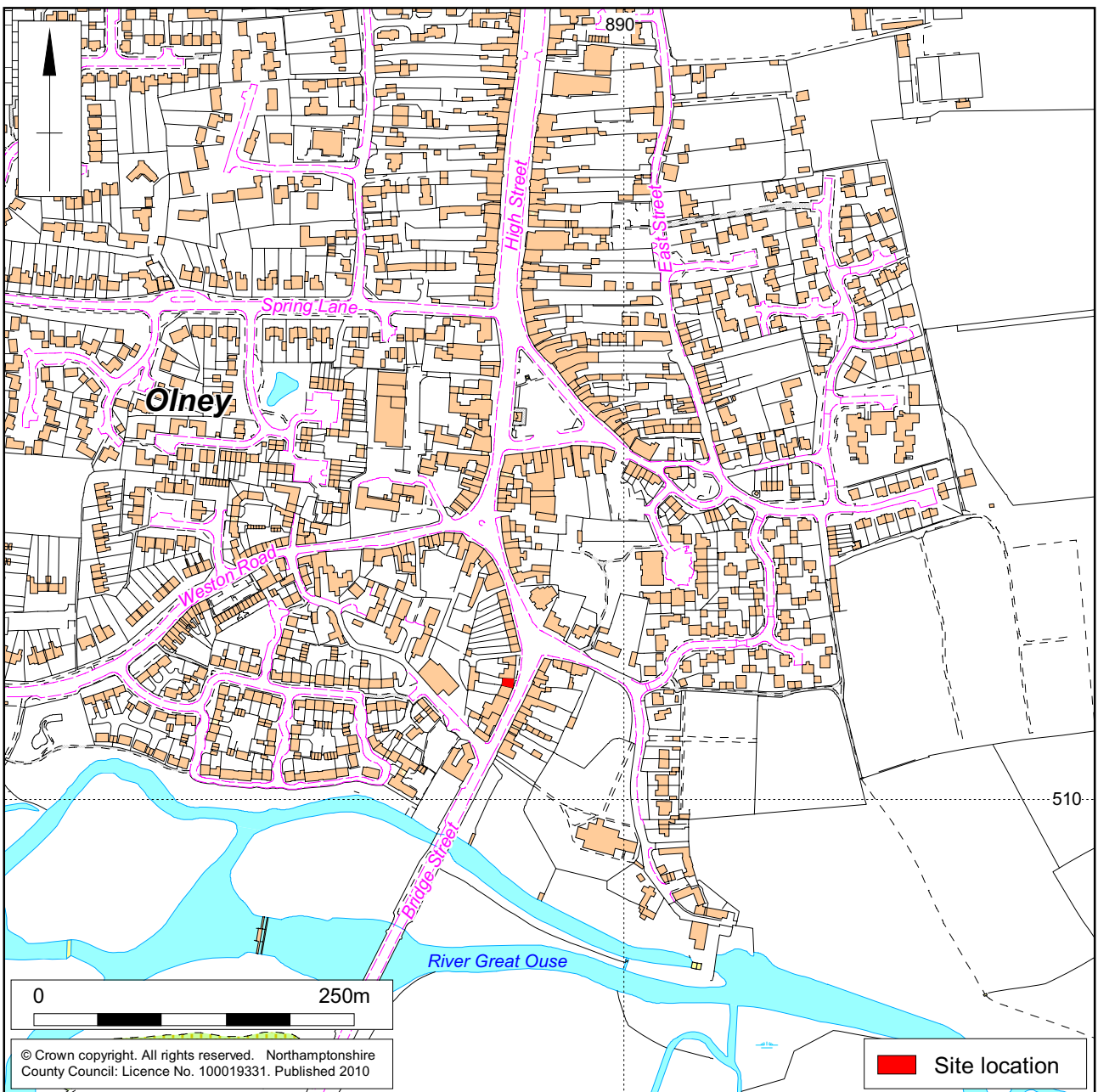
WEB PAGES

<http://lbonline.english-heritage.org.uk>

www.heritagegateway.org.uk

Northamptonshire Archaeology
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23 March 2011



Scale 1:5000

Site Location Fig 1



1810 Ordnance Survey preparatory map Fig 2

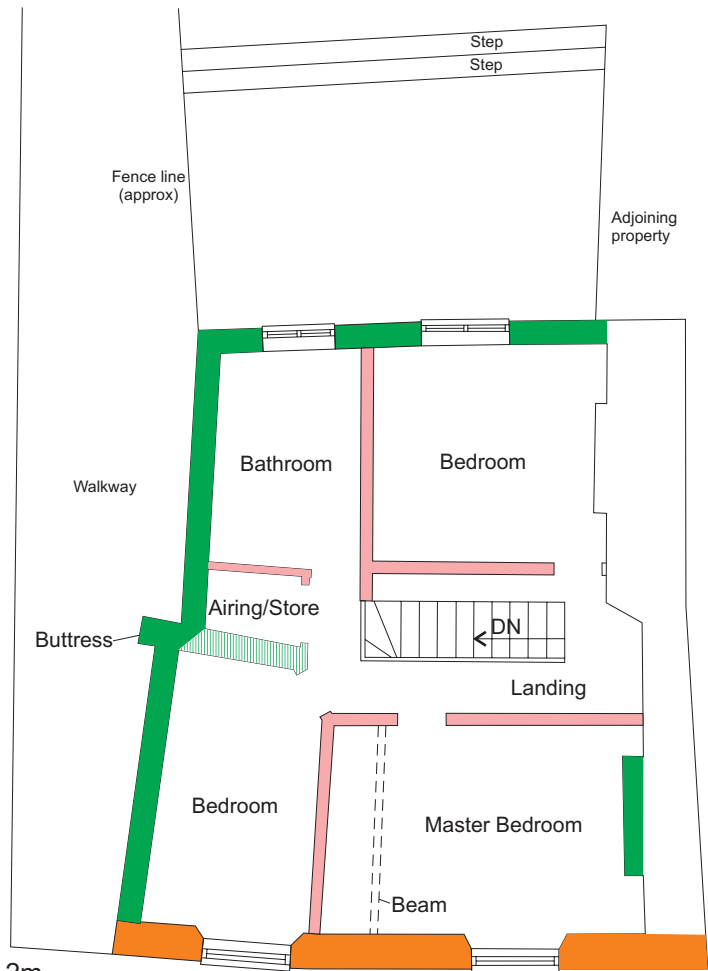


1882 Ordnance Survey First Edition map Fig 3

Existing Ground Floor



Existing First Floor



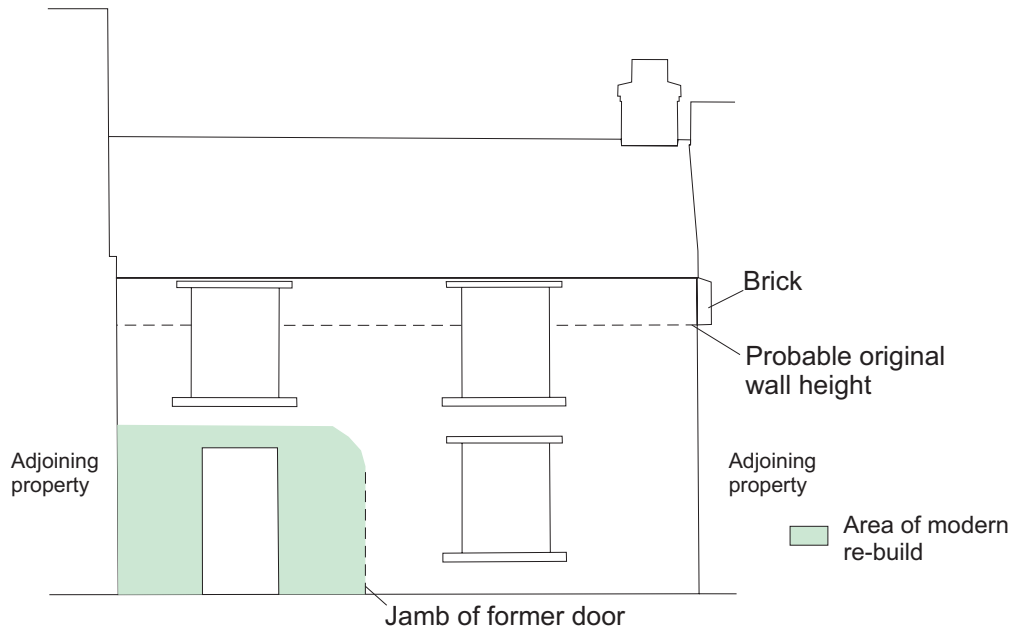
- Stud & plaster wall
- Brick wall
- Probable brick wall
- Stone wall



Scale 1:50

Ground and First floor plans Fig 4

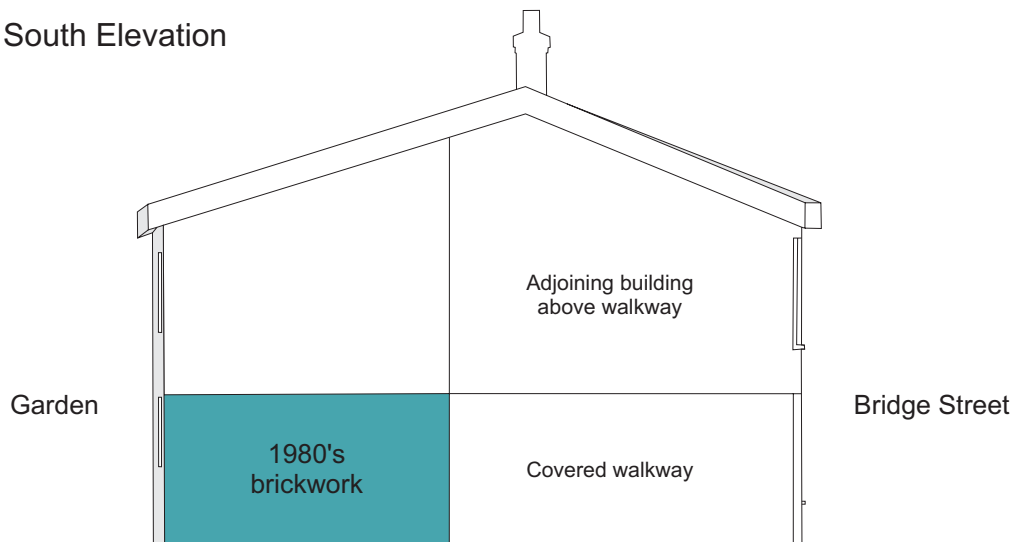
Existing East Elevation



Existing West Elevation



Existing South Elevation





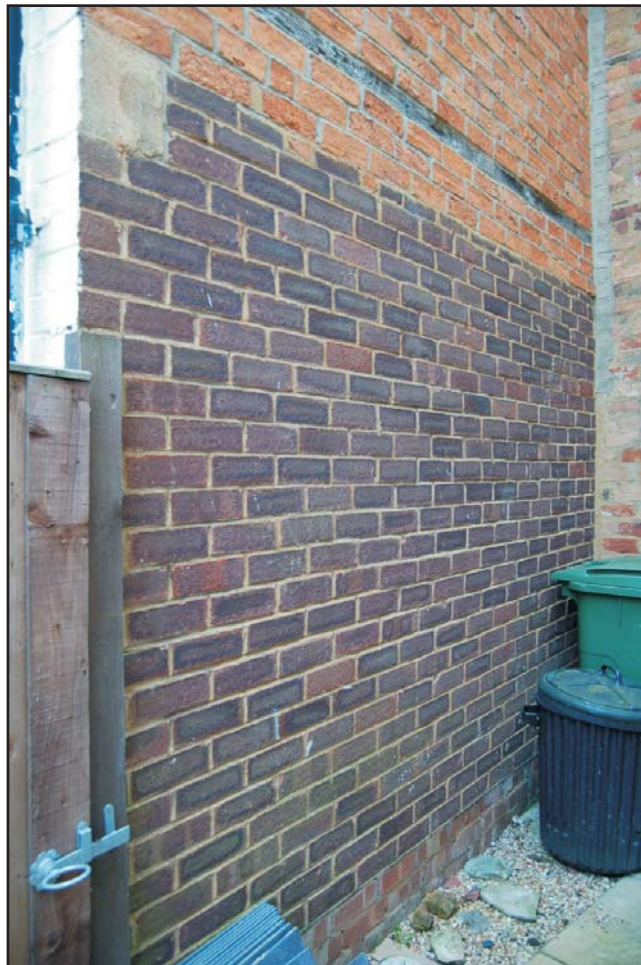
The east elevation, looking west Plate 1



The west elevation, looking east Plate 2



The kitchen window showing evidence for earlier, wider, opening Plate 3



The south elevation showing modern re-build of the lower portion, looking north-east

Plate 4



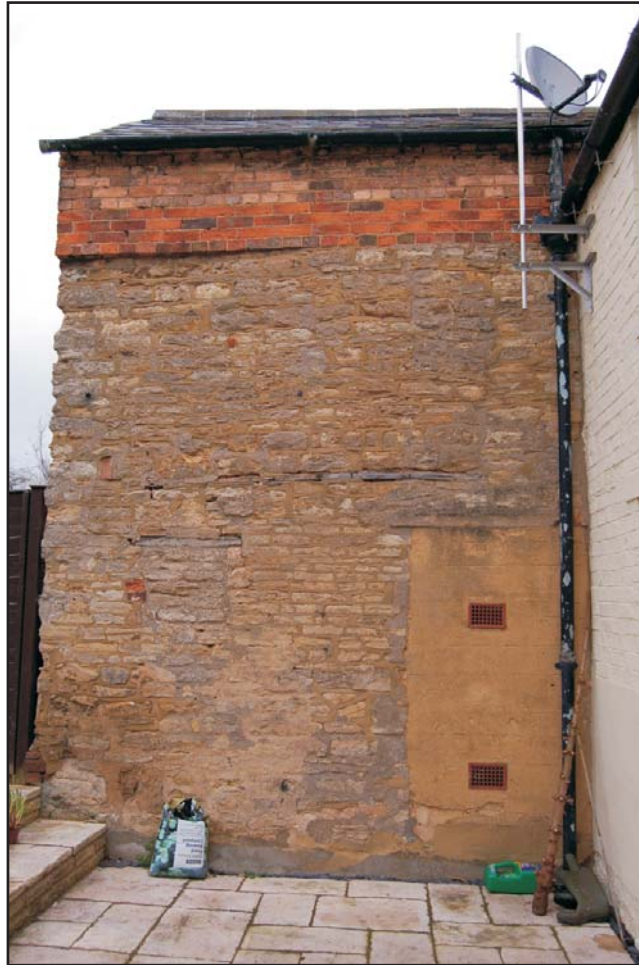
SUPPLEMENT TO THE LONDON GAZETTE, FEBRUARY 27, 1863. 1207

NAME.	RESIDENCE.	OCCUPATION.
Dixon, William Clark	13, Old Broad-street, London	Clerk
Duff, William	5, Nicholas-lane, London	Notary Public
Davies, Owen	7, King-street, Hammersmith	Oilman
Denham, George Boneton	12, Great Dover-Street, Borough	Manufacturer
Daniel, Robert	44, Grafton-street, Dublin	Barrister
Drummond, David	58, Dawson-street, Dublin.	Seedsman
Davis, Thomas Edward	160, Whitechapel-road, London	
Darvall, John Bayley	Australian Club, Sydney, New South Wales, and care of Hallett & Co., 14, Great	Barrister-at-law.
Francis, George Palmer	62, Lombard-street, London	Gentleman
Fox, Charles	12, De Beauvoir-road, Kingland	Commercial Traveller
Fraser, Lewis	39, Nicholas-lane, London	Merchant
Fredericks, Ernest	40, Southampton-buildings	Gentleman
Fell, William	14, Queen-street, Cheapside	Merchant
Finnie, William	Brafield House, Newport, Pagnel	
Fraser, Arthur	10, Randolph-crescent, Edinburgh	Esquire
Finnie, John	Bowden Lodge, Altrincham, Cheshire	Retired Merchant
Fitzgerald, Maurice	63, King-street, Manchester	Accountant
Flood, Frederick Leopold	2, Dame-street, Dublin	Solicitor
Fitzpatrick, Kate	18, Kildare-street, Dublin	Spinster
Farrer, Robert	59, Wesbourne Park Villas, Paddington	Gentleman
Farrell, Norah	Ellenfield, Drumcondra, county Dublin	Lady
Fridlander, Moss	Coventry	Gentleman
Fathaly, Frederick	5, Bank Chambers, Lothbury	Gentleman
Farnham, Thomas	106, City-road, London	Esquire
Gibson, Henry	1, Riches-court, Lime-street	Merchant
Goring, Thomas	1, Union-place, New Kent-road	Agent
Gaffney, Barnaby James	79, Great Tower-street, London	
Gibbon, Rev. William Lloyd	Avery-street, Dartford, Kent	Clerk in Holy Orders

No. 22711.

2 D

Paper label on the north side of the beam in the master bedroom & extract from the London Gazette



The south elevation of the property located at the rear and to the north of number 13, looking north

Plate 6



The rear elevation of number 13 and adjoining properties, looking south-east Plate 7



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