Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological Building Recording at The Last Straw, Great Brington Northamptonshire March 2011

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Report 11/99

April 2011

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project title	Archaeological Building Recording at The Last Straw, Great Brington, Northamptonshire	
Short description	Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out Archaeological Building Recording at The Last Straw, Great Brington, Northamptonshire. The building is a Grade II Listed thatched cottage, gutted by fire in December 2010. A supposed cruck blade recorded in 1977 is purported to indicate a probable medieval date, and a blocked doorway may indicate an early cross-passage design. A west wing was added prior to 1748. In the late 19th century the building was divided into three cottages. Major alterations in the 1990s returned the building to a single dwelling. The recent fire has denuded the historical fabric considerably.	
Project type	Archaeological Building Recording	
Site status	Grade II Listed	
Previous work	Limited Building Recording 1977	
Current land use	House and residential garden	
Future work	Major rebuilding following fire damage	
Monument type/period	Medieval stone-built and thatched cottage	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	The Last Straw, Hamilton Lane, Great Brington	
Study area (sq.m or ha)	350 sq m	
OS Easting & Northing	SP 66700 64800	
Height OD	125m OD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	JPP Consulting	
Project brief originator	Liz Mordue, Northamptonshire County Council	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Danny McAree	
Project Manager	Iain Soden	
Sponsor or funding body	JPP Consulting	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	21 March 2011	
End date	25 March 2011	
ARCHIVES	**Location**	**Content**
Physical		
Paper		
Digital		
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)	
Title	Archaeological Building Recording at The Last Straw, Great Brington, Northamptonshire	
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AT THE LAST STRAW, GREAT BRINGTON
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
MARCH 2011

ABSTRACT

Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out Archaeological Building Recording at The Last Straw, Great Brington, Northamptonshire. The building is a Grade II Listed thatched cottage, gutted by fire in December 2010. A supposed cruck blade recorded in 1977 is purported to indicate a probable medieval date, and a blocked doorway may indicate an early cross-passage design. A west wing was added prior to 1748. In the late 19th century the building was divided into three cottages. Major alterations in the 1990s returned the building to a single dwelling. The recent fire has denuded the historical fabric considerably.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out archaeological building recording on behalf of JPP Consulting between 21st and 25th March 2011, at The Last Straw, Hamilton Lane, Great Brington, Northamptonshire (NGR SP 66700 648000, Fig 1). The Grade II Listed thatched cottage was gutted by fire in December 2010. Discussions between JPP Consulting, Daventry District Council Heritage Officer and Northamptonshire County Council Assistant Archaeological Advisor had agreed a programme of archaeological building recording in tandem with clearance and reconstruction works.

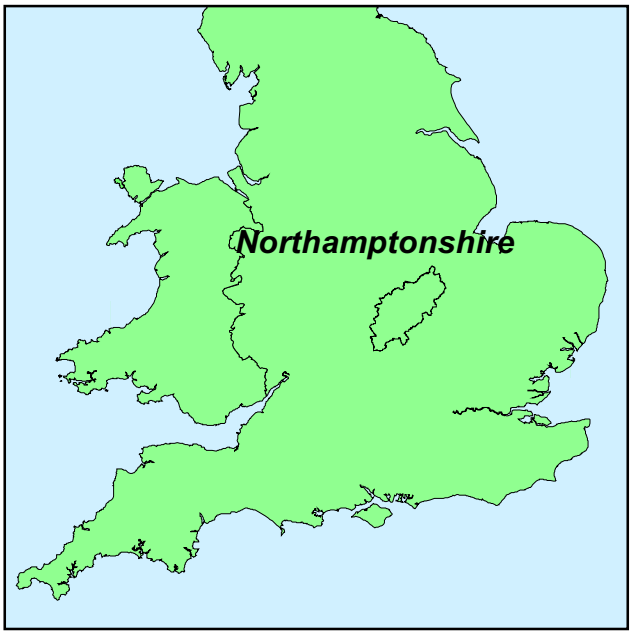
The fire and subsequent structural collapse had destroyed the entire thatched roof and the second floor bedroom at the east of the building. Ceilings were lost in all the first floor rooms and the floors of the bedroom and bathroom at the north-west corner of the building leaving the rooms below open to the elements. Extensive damage was caused by water used to put out the fire and by exposure to weather prior to the erection of protective scaffolding.

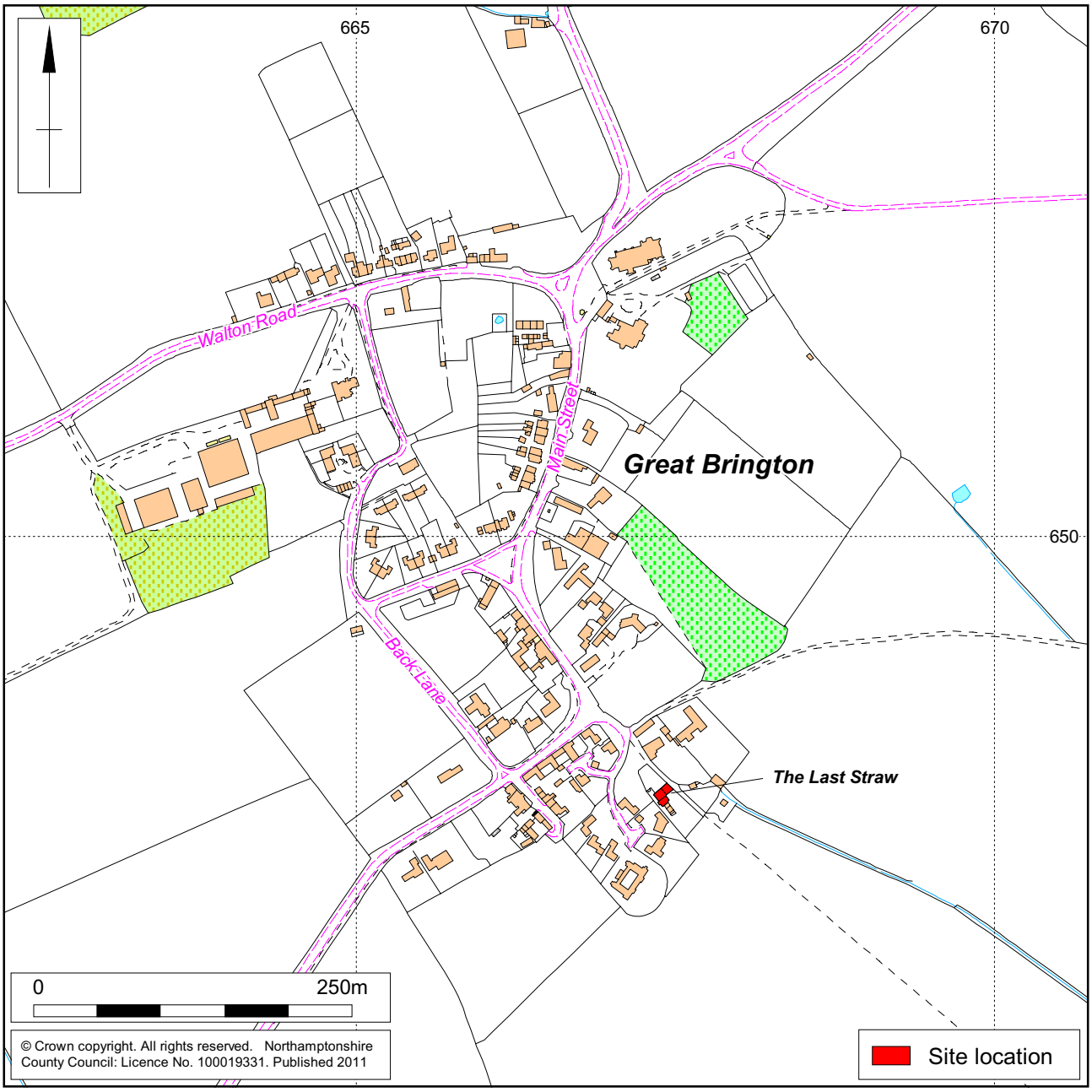
The recording was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Building Recording (NA 2011) and conforms with the standards and requirements contained within the *Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (IfA 2008). The recording equates approximately to Level II of the English Heritage guidance document, *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (EH 2006).

2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The site is located at the south-east edge of the village of Great Brington, Northamptonshire. A single-track access road extends south from Hamilton Lane, with The Last Straw occupying the whole of the west side of the track before it passes onto open agricultural fields to the south.

The underlying geology is mapped as Whitby Mudstone Formation overlain by Glacio-fluvial deposits of the Mid Pleistocene, mainly sands and gravels. The soils are slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage. (bgs.ac.uk, landis.org.uk/soilscapes).





Scale 1:5000

Site location Fig 1

The last Straw, *circa* 1990s, looking south Fig 2

The Last Straw, *circa* 2005, looking north Fig 3

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Historical background

At Domesday, in 1086, Brington, along with Althorp, Harlestone and Flore were subsidiary estates of the manor of Nobottle which was held by William Peverel. The Count of Mortain also held land in Brington.

The Spencers original seat was at Wormleighton in Warwickshire but they farmed land at Althorp in the late 15th century. The Mortain manor in Brington was acquired by Sir John Spencer in 1508, along with Althorp. In 1512 he was given permission by Henry VIII to build fortified manor houses at both Wormleighton and Brington and to empark over 400 acres of land at *Old Thorpe and Great Brington*. By the end of the 16th century much of the former Peverel manor was also in their possession. However, several hundred acres of land in Brington remained in the hands of the farmers of Little Brington.

The Wormleighton manor house was largely destroyed during the Civil War and the house at Althorp became the Spencer's main residence.

Brington was inclosed by Act of Parliament in 1743.

Until 1870 the village obtained its water from shallow wells, but these were drying up and the water was contaminated. A deep well was sunk just to the north of The Last Straw and water was pumped up, using horse-power, into a large tank. A mound still marks the location of the pump-house. By the 1890s this water supply was also contaminated and villagers were dying of typhoid fever. A new, deeper well was finally sunk to the west of the village and water drawn up using a wind-engine.

During the latter part of the 20th century the Althorp Estate were selling off the older building stock and selling vacant land for development. The Last Straw was one of the houses to be sold off.

The Last Straw lies within the Great Brington Conservation Area. The Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record was consulted, but, apart from the listed building entry there are no further relevant records.

The Listed Building Description for The Last Straw (Listed Building no:11/10003; Historic Environment Record no 979/0/29, Figs 2-3) is:

> HOUSE: *c*15th century, remodelled in *c* early 17th century and extended *c* 18th century. Squared coursed limestone. Thatched roofs with gabled ends. Gable end and axial stacks with brick shafts.
>
> PLAN: Three-room and through or cross passage plan, the lower end to right (north-east) with a *c* 1-room plan wing on the front of the high left end. At least the hall and high end and probably also the low end of the main range were open to the roof and heated from an open hearth fire in the hall. In about the early 17th century an axial stack was inserted into the low end of the hall backing onto the cross-passage, probably when the hall and both ends were floored. There is a 20th century partition in hall forming axial passage at front.
>
> EXTERIOR: 2 storeys. Asymetrical Four window south-east front. Small casements with leaded panes. Doorway on left with 20th century lean-to porch in angle of projecting gable-ended wing; inner return of wing has *c* 18th century two and three-light casements with leaded panes, the first floor in small gable. Rear (north-east) has one, three and four-light casements with leaded panes, with eyebrow eaves over first floor windows.
>
> INTERIOR: Hall has chamfered axial ceiling beam with cyma stops and large stone fireplace with similarly stop chamfered timber lintel. Rear room at low (right-hand) end has similar axial beam. Cross beam in parlour (left) is boxed in. Wing also has boxed in cross beam.

Smoke blackened raised cruck truss against high side of hall stack, its apex tenoned into triangular block (yoke), truncated to take large square set ridgepiece. Chamfered moulding with ball stop on south blade of cruck, below missing collar. Large purlins set on backs of cruck blades and some smoke blackened common rafters. Roof over low (north-east) end inaccessible.

3.2 Historic Mapping

Some of the estate records of the Earls Spencer were purchased for Northamptonshire Record Office (NRO) in 1986, although other records, including the estate maps went to the British Library. There are a number of maps of Great Brington among these maps. Copies of some of the maps have been made and are held by Northamptonshire Record Office, although in the majority of cases the accompanying schedule is missing or incomplete.

The village of Great Brington sketched from an old map, undated, but probably made about the year 1748 (NRO: SOX413/1; Fig 4)

This is the earliest extant map of the village. The house is L-shaped in plan and labelled *47* with a further range of buildings to the rear labelled *63*. Although there was no accompanying schedule to the map when it was copied the numbers were found to correspond to those in a rent roll of 1743-4 of John Spencer's New Enclosed Estate in Great and Little Brington. Unfortunately, 47 is not mentioned but 63 is listed as Budgeway Farm occupied by John Jakeman (also known as Ridgeway Farm in other documents). The single number for the house suggests that it is a single dwelling at this time.

Great Brington Tithe Map, 1840 (NRO: T176; Fig 5)

By 1840 the house appears to be much the same as it was 100 years previously but Budgeway or Ridgeway Farm and associated outbuildings appear to have been demolished. New buildings constructed on the opposite side of the lane are listed as a tenement and garden occupied by Thomas Sturman. The tithe apportionment states

2c Joseph Treadgold Occupier Tenement/garden

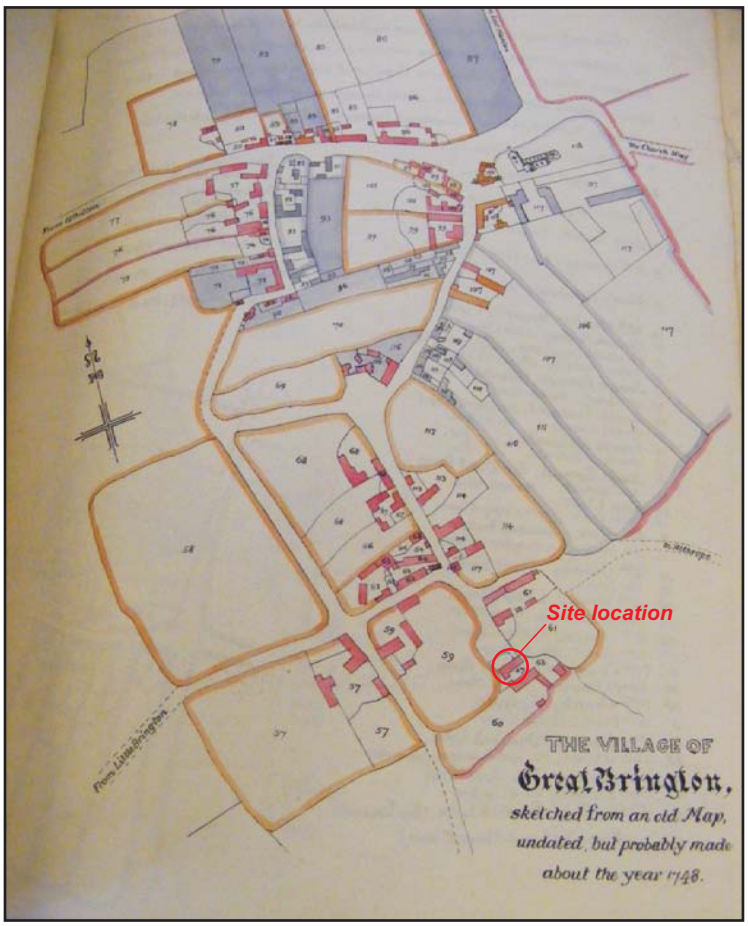
This confirms that the house was still a single dwelling until the middle of the 19th century.

First Edition Ordnance Survey map, 1887 (Fig 6)

The First Edition Ordnance Survey map indicates that the rear wing of the house has been extended to the south and has been divided into separate cottages (not visible on illustration). The tenement shown on the 1840 map on the opposite side of Tebbits Lane has been pulled down and replaced by a small building or barn.

Second Edition Ordnance Survey map, 1900 (Fig 7)

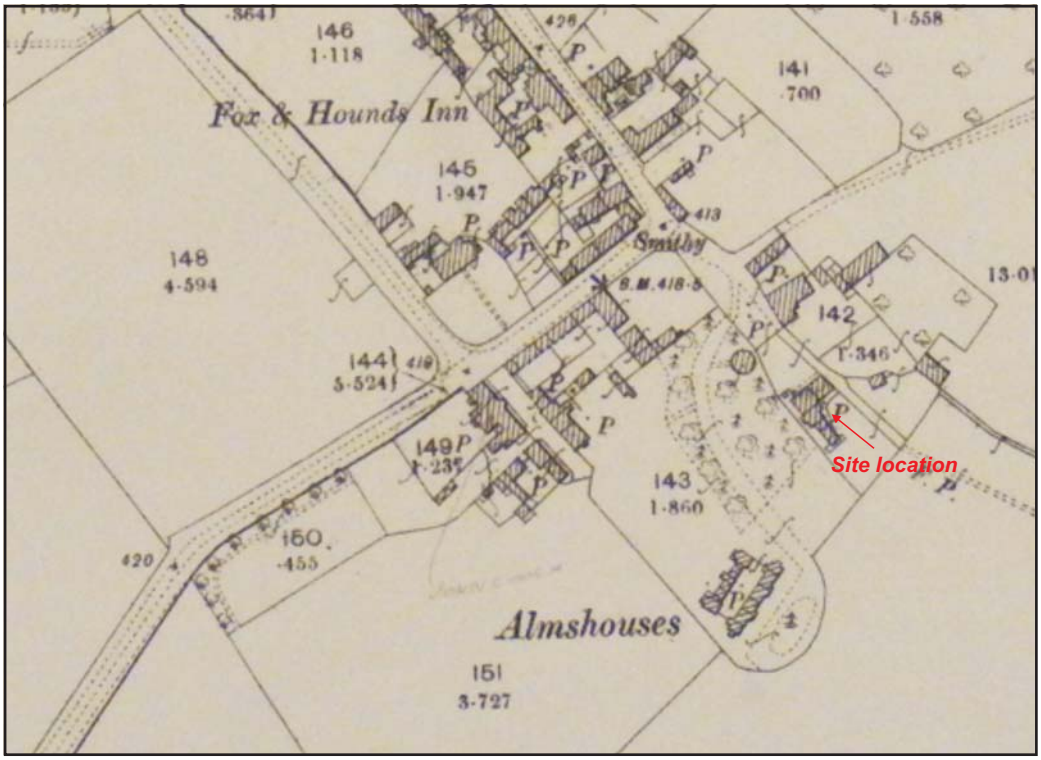
There is little change from the earlier map.



Plan of Great Brington, c1748 Fig 4
(courtesy of Northampton Record Office; S0X413/1)

Great Brington Tithe map 1840 Fig 5
(courtesy of Northampton Record Office; map T.176)

First Edition Ordnance Survey map, 1887 Fig 6



Second Edition Ordnance Survey map 1900 Fig 7

4 OBJECTIVES, METHODOLOGY AND STANDARDS

4.1 Objectives

The general objectives of the Archaeological Building Recording were to provide a record of significant structural elements affected by the fire, whether or not these elements are capable of re-use; and to provide a comprehensive visual record of the structure prior to rebuilding, as it represents upstanding archaeological/historical remains of local, regional and national importance.

4.2 Methodology

On-site records conform to the precepts of the English Heritage Level II Recording of Historic Buildings (EH 2006). The report includes a phased development block-plan of the buildings and an analysis of the function of the individual rooms and their working where such evidence still exists (within the constraint of undocumented periods of their existence and use).

An Initial photographic survey took place on site following clearance of the interiors. Interior recording at ground and upper floor levels took place without the introduction of internal scaffolding. The timbers that had been removed were checked for significant elements, none survived in a condition that warranted separate recording.

The site recording includes building plans establishing an archaeological record of the structure, and sectional elevations illustrating the vertical relationships within the building; at a scale of 1:50.

A photographic survey conforms to English Heritage Level II showing the building in its present, *post*-fire condition.

Detailed photographs were taken of the surviving element of the cruck. The main axial beams and roof timbers had been burnt, removed or were inaccessible. Damaged window leads to be replaced were checked for datable milling with negative results. Window catches, stays and door furniture were photographed *in situ* as appropriate.

Carrier beams were assessed for their suitability for dendrochronological dating. One beam was composed of two re-used lengths of timber, the other surviving beam showed no evidence of surviving sap wood.

This project report provides a comprehensive review of the local and regional historical context of the structures recorded by the project, making reference to the appropriate regional research agendas. It is sufficiently detailed to place the findings of the recording in their context and to be able to inform future decisions about the conservation and subsequent management of the structure

4.3 Standards

The buildings were recorded in accordance with the requirements of Northamptonshire County Council's brief (Mordue 2011) and the standards, conventions and specifications defined in the English Heritage procedural guidance (2006) to Level II, and in particular the records made as part of the work will conform to the following:

Written Account

This written account complies with components 1, 2, 3, 6 and 9/10 of the 2006 Edition of the English Heritage *Understanding Historic Buildings, A guide to Good Recording Practice*.

Drawn Record

The drawn record conforms to components 1-4, 6-7 of the 2006 Edition of the English Heritage *Understanding Historic Buildings, A guide to Good Recording Practice*. (5 was omitted as little architectural detail survived the fire). Architect's plans were verified and redrawn to show any developmental sequence, including alterations to openings and divisions.

Photographic Record

The photographic record conforms to components 1, 2, 3, 4, and (possibly) 5 of the 2006 Edition of the English Heritage *Understanding Historic Buildings, A guide to Good Recording Practice*. It contains both general and specific photographs to show exteriors, all general interiors and specific fixtures/fittings, if considered significant. For archive purposes the photographs are primarily of black and white negative with related prints, backed up by digital photos as appropriate.

The work was carried out in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief Evaluation* (IfA 1994, revised 2008) and the *Code of Conduct of the Institute for Archaeologists* (IfA 1997, revised 2010). All procedures complied with the Northamptonshire County Council Health and Safety provisions and Northamptonshire Archaeology Health and Safety at Work guidelines.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BUILDING RECORDING

The building recording took place between 21st and 26th March 2011. The building had been scaffolded around the external walls and the upper area covered with a metal sheet roof with plastic sheeting at the sides to preserve the remaining structure from the ravages of the weather (Back Cover).

The fire had destroyed the thatched roof and most of the roof timbers. The burnt thatch and timber had been cleared from the rooms prior to the start of recording. The partial second floor (bedroom 5) had been lost in the fire and structural collapse had then removed all first floor ceilings and several floors, including the ceilings of the matching ground floor rooms. Water ingress from the fire fighting has further denuded the historic fabric of the building.

The windows on the ground floor have been boarded up. In the absence of any mains services, this has rendered them extremely dark and prevented effective air circulation. This has resulted in infestation of mould on the damp plaster surfaces and fungal growth on remaining timbers.

Virtually all remaining furniture, floor and window coverings had been removed as part of the house clearance. Only fixtures, built-in cupboards and kitchen units have been left in place.

The recording commenced with a photographic survey of the full circuit of the building at ground floor level. This was inhibited by the presence of scaffolding, sand bags to stabilise the scaffold structure and occasional pots and planting that obscured parts of the walls. The building circuit was repeated from the scaffold at first floor level, however, as most of the walls finished at barely 1m above the scaffold level, little additional detail was obtained. The first floor scaffold did, however, allow views across and into the first floor rooms and the ground floor rooms where the ceilings had been lost. Opportunities to take photographs from this raised viewpoint were taken for all areas so exposed.

First floor, looking west Fig 8

The external walls are built of roughly shaped Northampton Sand with Ironstone (NSI) blocks laid in neat random courses and bonded with coarse lime mortar. Original window and door openings are neat and rectangular, with the window or door frames set back slightly from the wall front. Most original window openings have a 'splay' inside to increase natural lighting in the rooms.

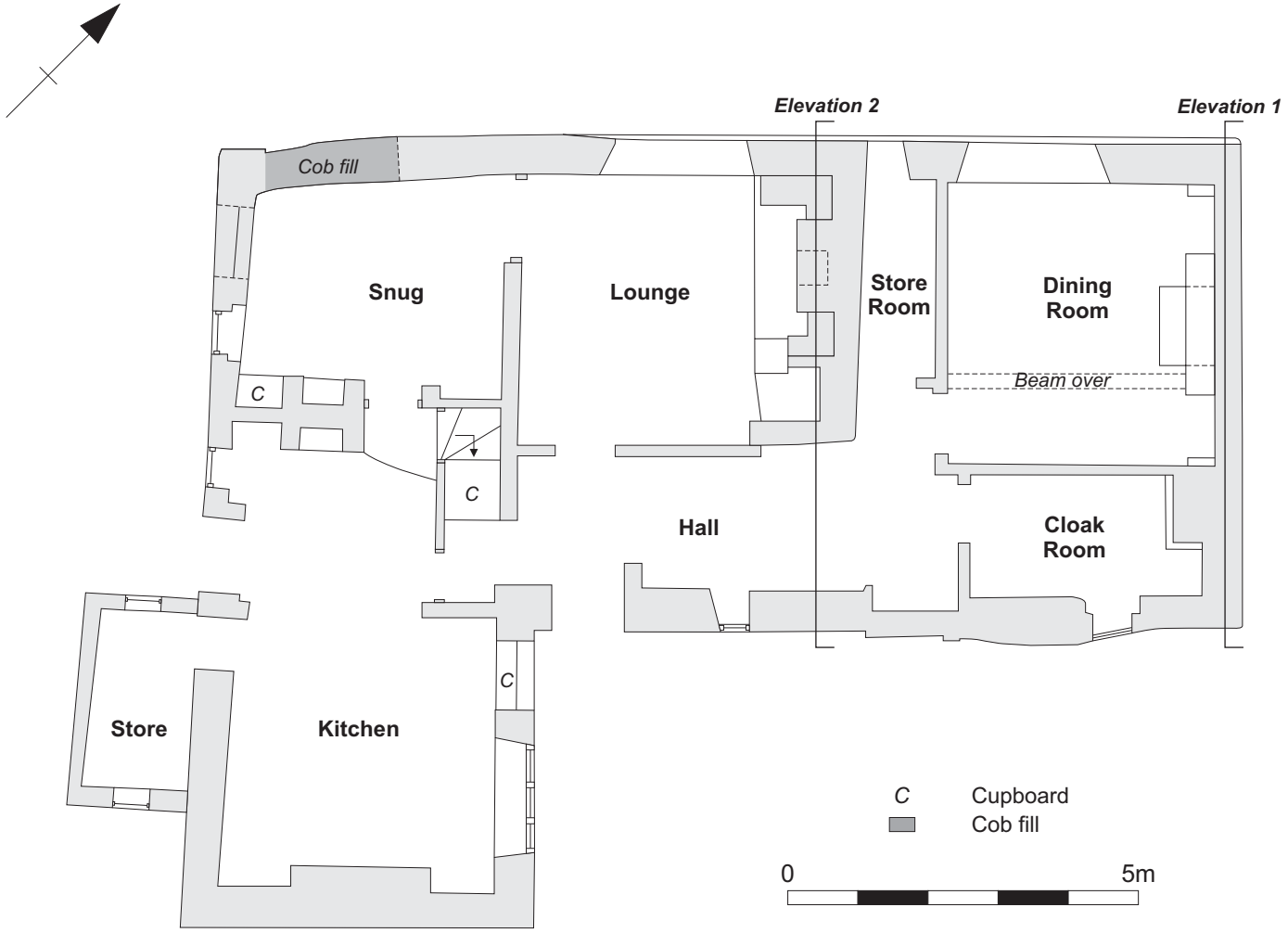
The 19th-century division of the building into three tenements has been done with little regard or sympathy for the original fabric of the building. Internal walls were built of red brick bonded with grey lime mortar. Windows and doors were cut through the earlier stone walls, only some of which have been given 'splays' to match the earlier building features. Subsequent alterations have resulted in poorly executed blocking of the spaces with roughly coursed ironstone stone blocks to the exterior and brickwork on the interior.

Internally, the early walls were daubed with cob, with a thin render of horsehair plaster as a finish coat, locally a common decorative method. Ceilings, where they survive, are invariably of lath with horsehair lime plaster. Internal dividing walls are an eclectic mix of wooden studding supporting lath and lime plaster, or latterly, brickwork plastered on both sides. No original floors survive at ground level. As part of the refurbishment in 1995, the floor level was reduced to increase internal headroom. The floors are concrete finished with either PVA screed, re-used quarry tiles, ceramic tiles or re-laid flagstones.

Architects drawings from 1977 and from the planning application for proposed alterations in 1995 were examined and found to be schematic only. They do not fully match the measured dimensions of the buildings and have not been used for archaeological recording purposes.

With restricted access to any of the external walls and limited access to a number of the internal rooms, the plans (Figs 9 and 27) and sectional elevations (Figs 13 and 16) produced are for purely archaeological purposes.

The names for the various rooms used on the architect's plans are used in this report for purposes of continuity and clarity in future decision making.



Scale 1:100 (A4)

Ground floor plan Fig 9

5.1 The ground floor

The Porch (Fig 3)

The porch is located within the angle of the main house (aligned north-east to south-west) and the north-south wing at the west of the building. The porch is open sided with a 1.6m square roof secured to the south wall of the main house by wooden beams set into the stonework. The roof plate is screwed to the east wall of the new wing. The porch roof angles down from the east to the west and is clad with grey Welsh slate with white painted vertical wooden boards closing the south gable.

Hall (Figs 9-11)

The hall is entered from the main doorway located in the south wall of the building. The doorway is 1m wide and 1.95m high. The softwood doorframe supports a vertically planked wooden door with four ledgers. It is fitted with two mortise locks, the larger of appears on stylistic grounds to date to the late 19th century. The second mortise lock is a late 20th-century metal lock. The door is fitted with a simple drop latch, a slide bolt and hung with decorative T-shaped strap hinges with roundels.

The hallway is 6.33m long and 1.75m wide. It is bounded along its axial length by the south wall of the building, and to the north by the lath and plaster stud wall between the hall and living room.

At the west of the hall, an opening has been cut through a brick staircase wall creating access to the kitchen and a cupboard under the stairs.

At the east, the hallway opens out with a blocked doorway to the south and a large storeroom to the north, doors leading to the dining room and the cloakroom lie at the east of the hallway.

Hallway, looking east Fig 10

Hallway, looking west Fig 11

The ceiling is 2.1m high and clad with lath and plaster. The floor is re-laid stone flags bedded with cement mortar.

The modern staircase rises from the hallway to the east of the main doorway and extends in a single lift of ten risers to the first floor landing. The staircase is a 1995 insertion with the exposed joints held by modern steel angle brackets.

A single window is located in the south wall within a slightly splayed opening 0.6m wide and 0.95m high. The window is set in a soft wood frame and comprises a single wrought iron opening casement supported on iron pintles secured by a simple metal revolving turnbuckle catch with a cast metal backing plate. The window has four saddle bars, dividing it into five horizontal segments each holding three leaded lights secured by modern lead window cames.

The Cloakroom (Figs 9-12)

The cloakroom is located off the hall at the south-east corner of the main building. It is 3.35m long, 1.86m wide increasing to 2.2m in the window recess with a lath and plaster ceiling 2.1m high. The floor is of red quarry tiles set on cement mortar.

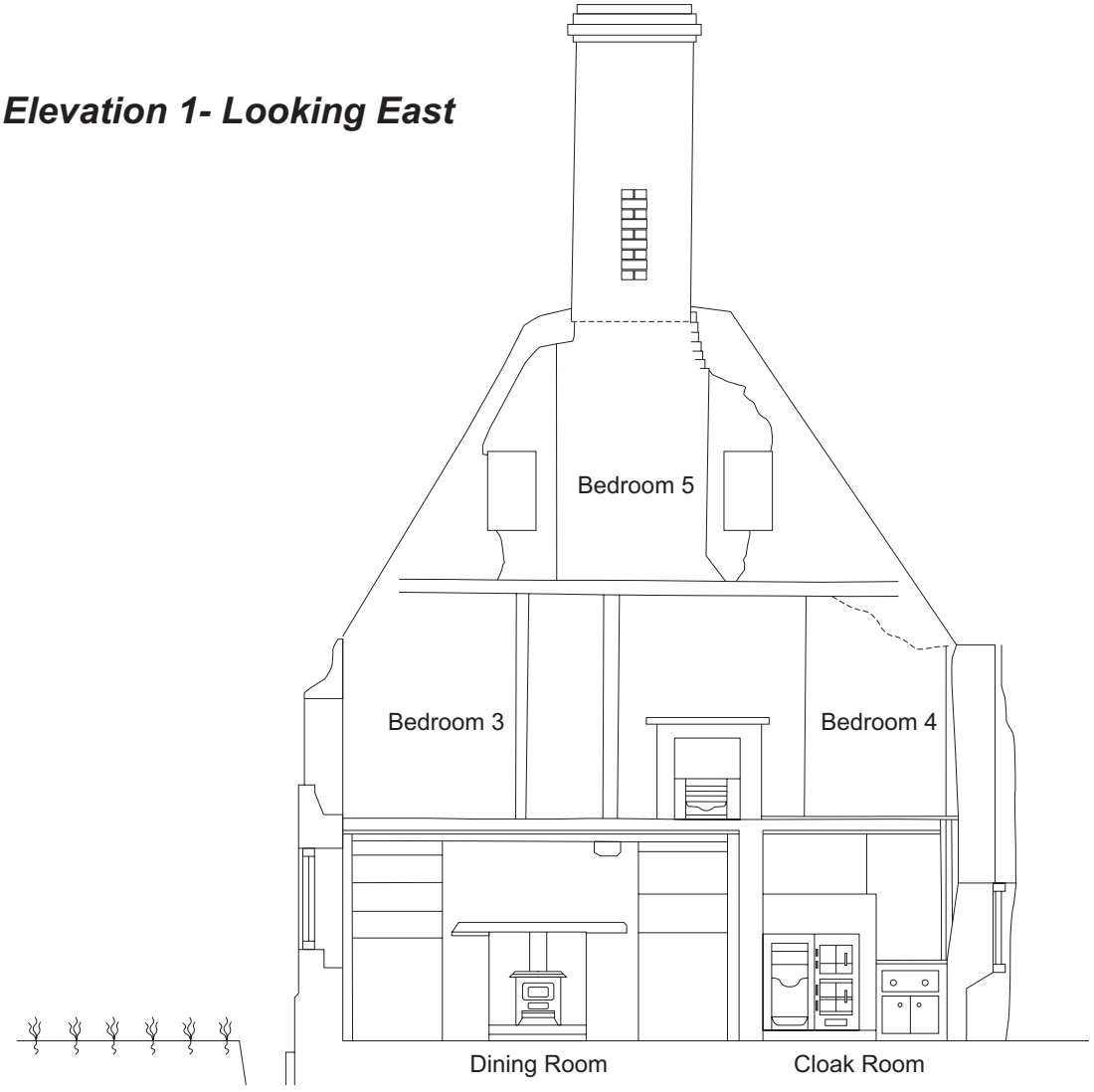
The north end of the east wall has a chimney breast 1.06m wide and 0.4m deep, faced with single thickness brick cladding up to 1.1m high. This contains a cast iron range, 0.96m square 'Foresigat' range, comprising an open fire grate and adjoining ovens. The oven doors are metal hinged and faced with four, red, square ceramic tiles in each door. Immediately to the south of the range was a wooden cupboard supporting a worktop with an inset sink.

Cloakroom, looking east Fig 12

A single window was located within a 1.6m high recess 0.78m wide, stepping in to 0.53m wide and 0.23m deep at the window. The softwood window frame contains a single wrought iron framed opening casement with four horizontal saddle bars supporting five registers of three leaded lights held in lead cames.

The window was hung on iron pintles and secured with a simple revolving turnbuckle catch with a metal backing plate. The wooden door was 1.9m high, 0.83m wide, vertically planked with four ledgers. It was hung on iron T-shaped strap hinges and secured with a simple thumb-latch and keeper. A single radiator was mounted on the north wall and a toilet is installed against the south wall.

Elevation 1- Looking East



Scale 1:75 (A4) East gable elevation, looking east Fig 13

The Dining Room (Figs 9 and 14)

The dining room is located at the north-east corner of the building and shares the stud, lath and plaster dividing wall with the cloakroom to the south. It is entered from a doorway from the hall, The doorway is 1.8m high, 0.84m wide and fitted with a vertically planked door with three ledgers. It is hung on iron T-shaped strap hinges and equipped with a metal mortise lock with round metal knob handles.

The window is located in the north wall and is 1.75m wide at the window frame splaying to 2.15m wide at the inner edge of the wall. The window comprises a soft wood frame 1.1m high with three casements, the two outer casements being fixed, the central casement opening. All three casements comprise wrought iron frames, each with four saddle bars dividing the windows into five horizontal segments each holding three leaded lights secured by lead window cames. The central opening casement is supported on simple iron pintles and secured with a metal revolving turnbuckle catch with backing plate. There is a hook and eye restraint for securing the window in the open position. The interior of the window splay had been cut down at the rear of the window frame creating a recess now filled with a radiator and a modern MDF cover.

Dining room, looking south-east Fig 14

The east wall of the room had been clad full height with a single brick cladding that extended 0.37m along both the north and south walls, into the recesses at each side of and around the central chimney breast itself. A brick hearth 1m wide extends 0.3m forward of the fireplace which contains a modern metal solid fuel stove. The two side recesses carry wooden shelves supported on wooden batons.

The floor was close boarded with a mix of re-used and modern boarding averaging 0.15m wide. The ceiling was lath and plaster and sagged across the whole central part of the room. It was supported by planks and ACRO props. The plaster work had all collapsed following the fire and damping down, exposing the split wooden laths over the central part of the room.

A wooden beam located 1.1m from the south wall carried the ceiling joists. It was exposed 0.13m deep, 0.23m wide with a 30mm chamfer along both exposed edges. The timber was clearly re-used with a mortise cut in the side at the west end. The beam was made of

two pieces, spliced at 1.2m from the east end which was built into the modern wall cladding but which almost certainly extends into the original stone outer wall.

The Storeroom (Figs 9 and 15)

The storeroom is located between the west wall of the dining room and the east wall of the central chimney breast. It is 2.85m long, 1.06m wide and 2.1m high. The room is accessed from the east end of the hall.

The wooden door is 1.85m high, 0.8m wide, vertically planked with four ledgers. It is hung on iron T-shaped strap hinges and secured with a simple thumb-latch and keeper. It has a circular glass ''light'' 0.15m diameter in the upper register to 'borrow' light from the hall.

The only window is set in the north wall with a straight side adjacent to the chimney breast and a slight splay to the east. The window opening is 0.9m high, 0.36m deep, 0.62m wide at the splay tapering to 0.5m wide at the rear of the window. The softwood window frame contains a wrought iron framed opening casement with four horizontal saddle bars supporting 15 leaded lights held in cames. The window is hung on iron pintles and secured with a simple revolving turnbuckle catch with a metal backing plate.

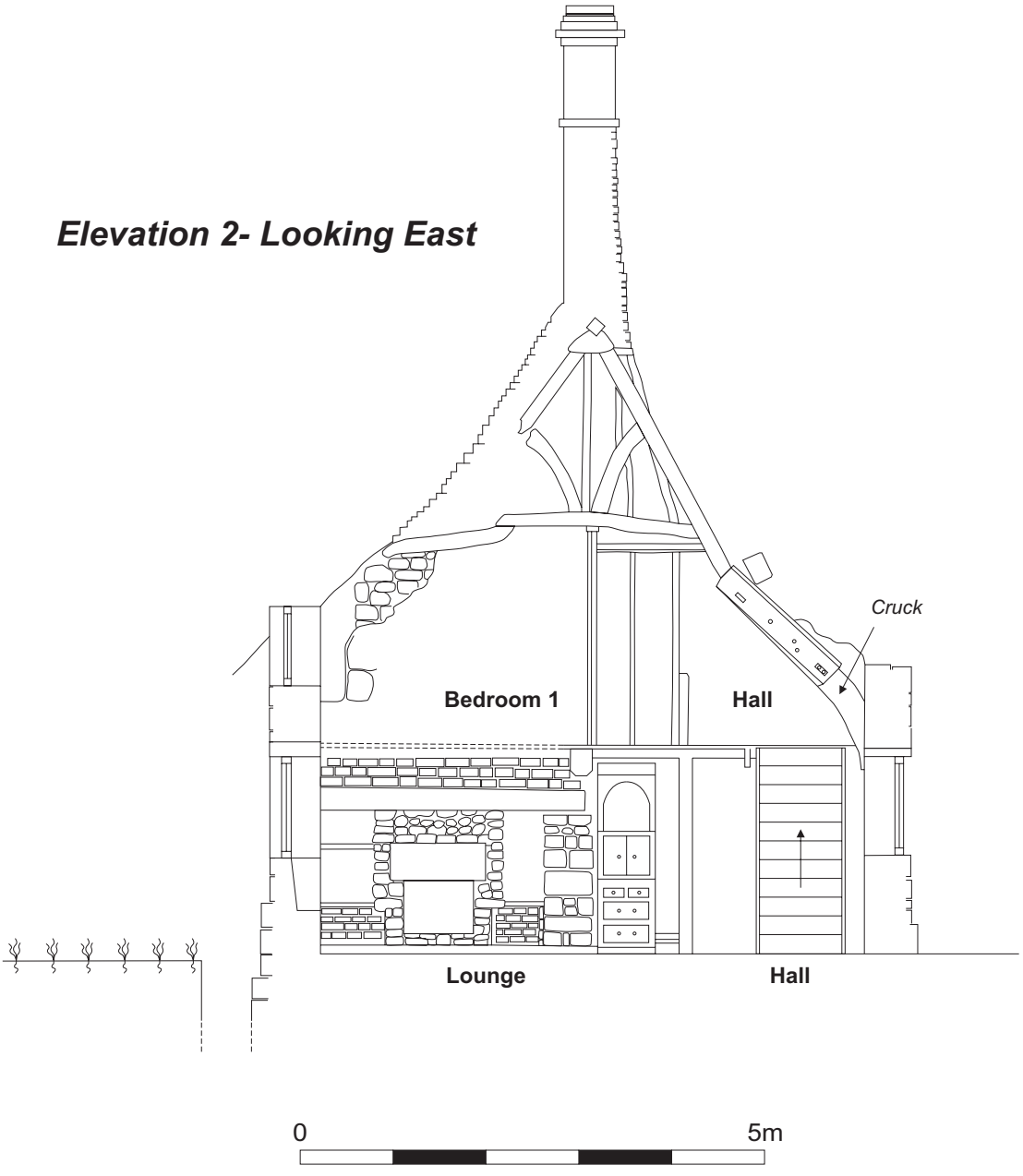
The ceiling is lath and plaster, the floor is modern cement concrete. Free standing cupboards and modern wooden shelves supported on wooden battens were the only fitments in the room.

The storeroom, looking north Fig 15

The Lounge (Figs 9, 16-18)

The lounge is located to the west of the storeroom and accessed off the hall, opposite the front door of the house. The room is rectangular, 4.25m from west wall to the maximum recess within the inglenook (3.12m to the inglenook beam), and 3.92m from north wall to hall wall. The room is 2.1m high with a concrete floor and a lath and plaster ceiling. The majority of the ceiling was lost in the fire and subsequent 'damping down'.

Elevation 2- Looking East



Scale 1:75 (A4) Elevation, looking east Fig 16

The architrave on the door from the hall has a curved Victorian moulding 0.13m wide and 10mm deep. The wooden door is 1.9m high, 0.85m wide, vertically planked, with four ledgers. It has a circular glass ''light'' 0.15m diameter in the upper register. It is hung with iron T-shaped strap hinges and secured with a metal mortise lock with round Bakelite knob handles.

The doorway in the west wall is 1.86m high and 0.84m wide. The plain wooden door casing is not dateable, and no evidence of the door survives.

The north wall contains the only window, 1.84m wide at the window frame splaying to 2.2m wide at the inner edge of the wall. The window opening was 1.1m high and contains a soft wood frame divided into four casements, each with a fixed transom over. All the windows were fixed except for a single opening casement east of centre.

All the transoms have a single saddle bar supporting two registers of three leaded lights, each held in lead window cames. The casements originally had wrought iron frames, each with four saddle bars supporting five registers of three leaded lights all held in lead window cames. The opening casement is secured with a revolving turnbuckle catch with a metal back plate, on the external side of the frame there is a plain quadrant stay. A timber-lined window seat lies directly below the window.

Lounge, looking north-west Fig 17

The east wall was formed from a large stone built chimney breast containing an inglenook fireplace. To the south of the fireplace, a recess contains a wooden cupboard.

The chamfered inglenook beam is 2.8m long with cyma stops and extends from the north wall to a substantial stone built pier to the south. The void behind the beam is 0.75m deep and contains a centrally located stone built fireplace with a cast iron fire grate.

A decorative modern metal smoke hood is mounted on the front of the fireplace above the grate. At each side, low level stone walls carry wooden covers forming storage and/or seating either side of the fireplace. The entire floor area within the inglenook is raised 0.1m above the remainder of the room floor.

Lounge, looking south-east Fig 18

Located 0.9m north of the hall wall, a chamfered axial wooden beam had supported the ceiling joists over the lounge. The beam is 0.27m high, 0.25m wide with a chamfered stop at the east end. The beam had originally carried joists in mortise and tenon joints with housed diminished shoulders. These had been replaced by new joists carried in galvanised joist hangers nailed to the sides of the beam.

The Snug (Figs 9 and 19)

The Snug is located at the north-west corner of the building and immediately west of the lounge. A doorway at the north of the east wall gives access to the lounge which lies to the east. The double brick wall forming the dividing wall with the lounge was matched by a second, parallel, single-brick wall 0.6m to the west. These walls formed the sides of a staircase originally giving access to the first floor. The staircase had been removed in the past and the lower portion of the west wall removed and replaced by a steel 'I' beam, creating a larger open room. The room now measures 3.72m along the east-west axis and 3.1m north to south.

On the south wall, a door opening 1.86m high, 0.76m wide provides access to the kitchen. The door casing is modern softwood. The door has been lost in the fire and clearance.

Immediately to the west of the door frame, there is a brick-built chimney breast 1.18m wide with a central fire recess 0.96m high, 0.7m wide and 0.4m deep beneath a timber lintel, 0.93m long and 0.11m thick. The recess contains a modern metal solid fuel stove. In the alcove to the west, there is a full height wooden cupboard with glazed doors in the upper register and solid doors in the base.

In the west wall, a doorway has been blocked on the outside and the internal recess used for book shelving. The window recess is 0.77m wide stepping in to 0.55m at the window frame. The softwood window frame is 0.9m high with a single wrought iron framed opening casement with four saddle bars supporting five registers of three leaded lights. It is hung on iron pintles and secured with a revolving turnbuckle catch with metal backing plate.

Snug, looking south-west Fig 19

On the external face of the north wall at the west end of the building, two vertical joints clearly indicate a wide opening at this location. The opening was 2m wide and extended from the floor level to the full height of the walls at the wall plate. The lower part of this opening had been blocked with roughly dressed and randomly coursed ironstone bonded with coarse lime mortar. Internally, the wall at this location is located in the north-west of the snug. No evidence of an earlier door or window could be identified internally as the wall retained its horsehair lime plaster.

The floor is of cement concrete, the ceiling had been lath and plaster at 2.1m high, it had been totally lost in the fire and subsequent clearance.

The kitchen (Figs 9, 20-21)

The kitchen occupies the whole ground floor of the western range to the main house. It is accessed from the Snug and from the hall to the east. In the north-east corner, a staircase rises to the first floor. The stair doorway was originally hung with a door that closed at first step height, this had been stripped in the building clearance. The stair opening is 1.9m high and 0.69m wide with the angled ceiling height above the stairs at 1.74m.

At 1.3m to the south, a doorway gives access to a lobby leading to the main hall. This doorway is 1.8m high, 0.65m wide and fitted with a vertically planked wooden door with four ledgers. It is hung on iron strap hinges and secured with a mortise lock fitted with round bakelite knob handles.

Immediately to the south, a boxed beam, 0.26m wide and 0.21m high extends east-west across the kitchen. It is a 1990s insertion following the removal of part of the original south wall of the house.

To the south of the beam, a doorway had been cut through the east wall adjacent to the existing front door in the south wall of the main house. This has since been closed up. The interior recess has been used to house kitchen wall cupboards.

Kitchen, looking south-west Fig 20

Kitchen, looking north-west Fig 21

The north wall of the kitchen contains a chimney breast, 1.18m wide with a mantle shelf at 1.6m high. The central fire recess is 0.96m high, 0.7m wide and 0.4m deep.

About 1m to the south, the window is 1.67m wide at the splay and 0.47m deep, tapering to 1.49m at the window frame. The softwood window frame is 0.9m high and contains three wrought iron framed casements with a central opening casement. Each window is fitted with four saddle bars supporting five registers of three leaded lights all fixed in lead window cames. The opening casement was hung on pintles and secured with a revolving turnbuckle catch with metal backing plate.

The south wall retains an earlier chimney breast 2m wide, now concealed behind modern kitchen cupboards and ceramic tiles.

The west wall has been cut through to make three doors and a window. The window rebate is 0.54m wide and 0.43m deep to the softwood window frame. The frame is 0.9m high and contains a single wrought iron framed casement, fitted with four saddle bars supporting five registers of three leaded lights all fixed in lead window cames. The casement was hung on pintles and secured with a revolving turnbuckle catch with metal backing plate.

The door to the rear of the premises is 2.0m high, 0.98m wide and fitted with a vertically planked wooden door with four ledgers. It has a glass 'light' 0.3m high and 0.25m wide placed centrally between to two upper ledgers. The door is hung on iron T-shaped strap hinges and is secured by two modern metal slide bolts, a simple thumb latch and a mortise lock that on stylistic grounds appear to be of 19th-century manufacture.

Immediately to the south, the doorway to the store room is 1.8m high, 0.8m wide and fitted with a vertically planked wooden door with four ledgers. It has a glass 'light' 0.3m high and 0.25m wide placed centrally between the two upper ledgers. The door is hung on iron T-shaped strap hinges and is secured a simple thumb latch.

The store (Fig 9)

The store is a later brick-built addition with stone facing on the south elevation. It is a single storey structure with a lean-to roof clad in Welsh slate.

The bricks are all 0.25m long, 0.11m wide and 0.03m wide (9"x4½"x3") laid in irregular Flemish bond and bedded with hard grey lime mortar.

Internally the store measures 2.33m long, 1.4m wide at the south, tapering to 1.3m to the north. The internal roof is lath and plaster 2.1m high. The south wall contains a centrally placed soft wood window frame, 0.78m high, 0.48m wide and containing a single wrought iron framed casement with three saddle bars supporting four registers of three leaded lights held in lead window cames. It is hung on pintles and secured by a simple revolving turnbuckle catch.

The north wall also has a single central window with a softwood frame 0.93m high, 0.43m wide containing a single wrought iron framed casement with four saddle bars supporting five registers of three leaded lights held in lead window cames. It is hung on pintles and secured by a simple revolving turnbuckle catch.

5.2 The first floor

The Cruck (Figs 16, 22-26)

Rising from the south wall and crossing the new stairwell to the central chimney stack are the fragmentary remains of a cruck truss. The cruck blade is 0.23m wide and up to 0.4m thick with the lower part set into the south wall, curving out and over the stairwell and landing.

Cruck, looking south-east Fig 22

Cruck detail, looking south Fig 23

On the underside of the cruck blade there is a chamfered moulding with a carved ball stop located below what was probably a large recess or mortise, almost certainly for a missing collar beam. At about 0.6m above the landing floor, the cruck has been 'splinted' on each side by timbers up to 1.8m long, 0.35m wide and 0.1m thick. The splint timbers are clearly reused with chamfers, holes and slots cut into them. They are secured to the cruck blade by wooden dowels.

The cruck had clearly degraded in the past because at the upper end of the splints, the cruck blade has been replaced at a more acute angle by a separate timber beam up to 0.25m wide and 0.15m thick. This extended from the splints, north across the front of the central chimney stack where it was jointed into a triangular 'yoke' that supported the remains of the axial ridge beam. The corresponding beam to the north had been largely destroyed in the fire.

The upper beams were supported with curved braces set in a collar beam above the original ceiling height. The truss supported axial beams, of which only a fragments of one survives above the landing on the southern side of the roof. It was too badly charred to be considered for dating purposes. The upper surface is less badly affected and carries the rebates for the weather boards originally placed to help support the weight of the thatch.

Cruck, looking north-east Fig 24

Cruck, yoke and braces, looking north-east Fig 25

On the north wall, at its junction with the central chimney stack, there was no evidence for a corresponding cruck blade to the one on the south wall. Removal of some of the lime plaster revealed that there is a void in the stonework of the chimney stack in the appropriate place but it contains no timber cruck. At some time in the past, the void had been filled with cob and plastered.

Cob fill, looking east Fig 26

The landing (Figs 16 and 27)

The landing is approached up the modern staircase from the ground floor hall. The landing is 5.7m long east to west and 3m wide north to south. The floor is a mix of new and re-used close jointed timber boarding varying between 0.21m and 0.29m wide. The ceiling was lath and plaster, 2.1m high along the centre and north side of the landing, sloping down to the wall plate on the south wall at about 1.4m above floor height. The ceiling area around the doorway to bedroom 1 appears to have had a lower, false ceiling of modern plasterboard. The remainder of the ceiling has now been lost.

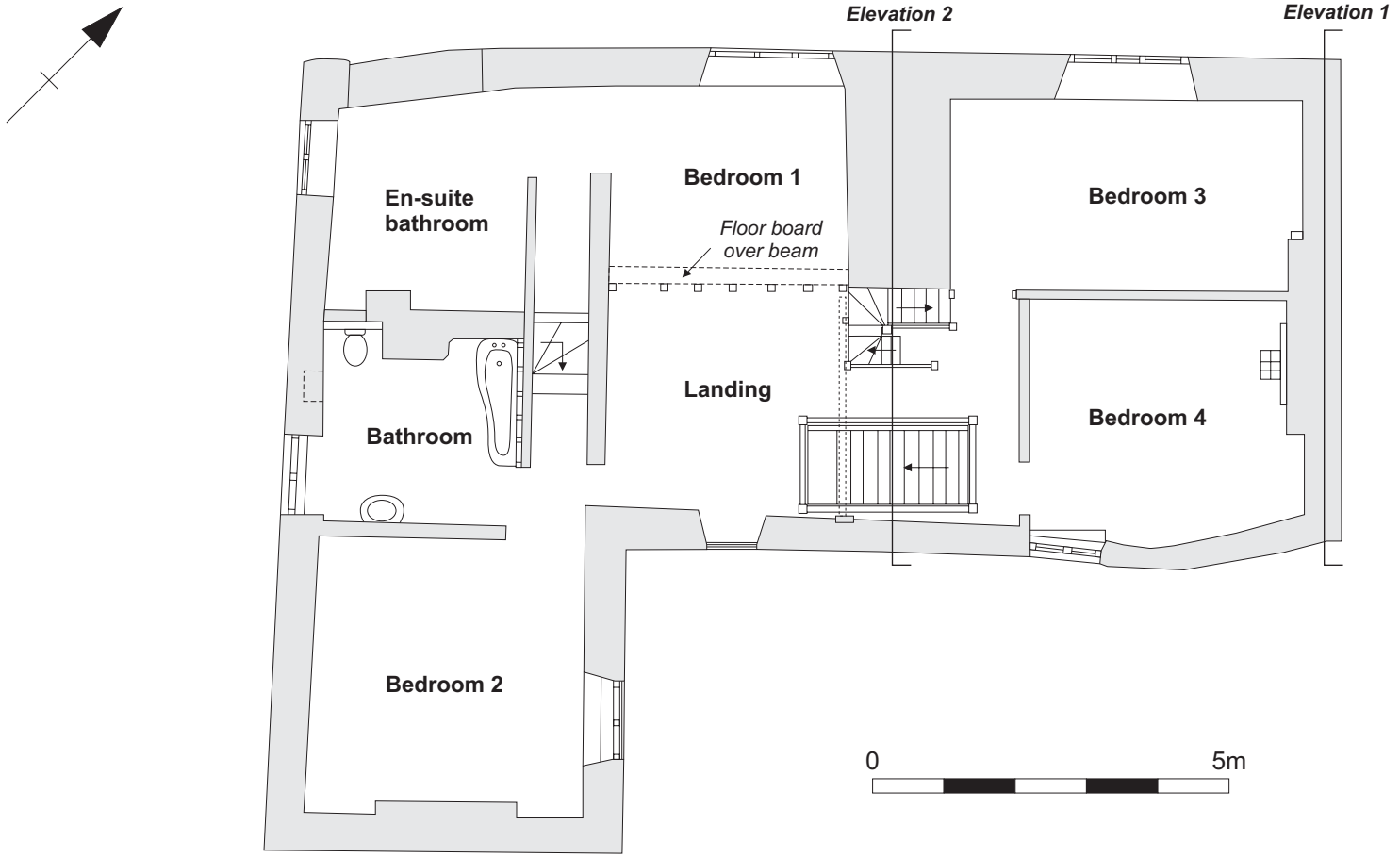
Four doorways lead off the landing, to the north lies Bedroom 1 with an attached en-suite, to the west; a doorway opens onto the lobby at the top of the staircase up from the kitchen giving access to the family bathroom and bedroom 2 to the south. At the east of the landing, Bedroom 3 lies to the north with bedroom 4 to the south.

The only window is set into the west end of the south wall below the wall plate. It is 1m wide at the splay, 0.43m deep, 0.7m high and 0.7m wide at the back of the softwood window frame. The window comprises both a single fixed and an opening casement, both with wrought iron frames and two saddle bars supporting three registers of two leaded lights held in lead window cames. The opening casement is hung on pintles and secured by a simple hook and eye catch.

Cut into the original stonework above the lounge chimney, a narrow staircase gave access to the second floor, bedroom 5.

The rooms are described in the order they are numbered on the architects drawing.

Scale 1:100 (A4)



First floor plan Fig 27

Bedroom 1 with en-suite bathroom (Figs 16, 27-29)

Bedroom 1 measures 3.1m north to south and 3.2m east to west. The floor was close boarded supported on modern timber joists set on metal joist hangers still visible on the axial beam exposed in the lounge directly below this room.

The ceiling was 2.1m high lath and plaster in the centre of the building sloping down to the wall plate on the north wall at about 1.5m above the floor level.

The north wall contained a window, 0.9m high, 1.85m wide at the splay tapering to 1.45m at the back of the softwood window frame. The frame has survived the fire and comprised two fixed and a central opening casement. The central wrought iron casement was hung on hinge pintles, none of the glass or fixings have survived the fire and subsequent clearance.

The south wall is formed from wooden studs supporting a single skin of lath and plaster and located directly above the axial beam visible in the lounge. On the landing side, this wall was left with the studs exposed. The doorway in this wall was at the south end and was 1.9m high and 0.85m wide and fitted with a vertically planked door with four ledgers. It was hung on iron T-shaped strap hinges and secured with a simple drop latch.

The central chimney breast forms the east wall, the west wall is constructed of red bricks 0.25m long, 0.11m wide and 0.03m wide (9”x4½”x3”) laid in an irregular bond and bedded with hard grey lime mortar. The doorway opening at the north of this wall is 1.86m high and 0.84m wide. No evidence of the door frame or door survived the fire.

Bedroom 1, looking south Fig 28

The en-suite bathroom, looking south-west Fig 29

The west doorway from Bedroom 1 gives access to the en-suite bathroom. The room measures 3.2m north to south and 2.8m east to west. It had a modern plastered ceiling 2.1m high in the centre of the building, sloping down to the wall plate on the north wall. The ceiling was hung on new wooden rafters supported by an axial steel joist.

A single window is located in the west gable wall. It is 0.95m wide, 0.88m high and 0.43m deep to the back of the softwood window frame. The window comprises both a single fixed and an opening casement, both with wrought iron frames and four saddle bars supporting five registers of three leaded lights held in lead window cames. The opening casement is hung on iron pintles and secured by a revolving turnbuckle catch with backing plate.

The north wall at the west of the room had clearly been altered with the insertion of a single leaf of brickwork closing what may have been an original window at this location. Internally, this brickwork was covered in a thick render of horsehair lime plaster with roof tiles laid on edge to bulk out and level the inner wall surface. Externally, the opening is clearly defined by straight line vertical joints from the wall plate down to ground level. This space has been filled with cob sealed externally with a thin layer of horsehair lime plaster. The cob fill rests on top of the lower stone blocking.

The floor and ceiling had been lost in the fire. The fixtures and fittings of the en-suite bathroom, the toilet, sink and roll-top bath had all fallen into the snug below. Only the modern toilet cistern and associated pipework remained in the alcove to the west of the chimney brace on the south wall. The recess formed by the former stairwell had been used as a wardrobe. All other detail had been lost in the fire.

The bathroom (Figs 27, 30)

The bathroom is located immediately south of the en-suite and is accessed from a doorway from the lobby at the top of the stairs that lead down to the kitchen. It is 2.6m long north to south, 2.9m wide east to west with a ceramic tiled floor.

The lath and plaster ceiling is 2.1m high fixed to modern timber joists supported on an axial steel joist.

The west wall is of ironstone with horsehair lime plaster. The remaining walls are all single brick walls with lime plaster. On the north wall there is a blocked and plastered chimney breast. A chimney flue has been inserted on the west wall for a Victorian fireplace with a cast iron grate.

The north and east walls had been battened and plaster-boarded to allow the fixing of modern ceramic tiling around a Jacuzzi bath. A low-flush toilet is fitted in the alcove to the west of the original chimney breast. A modern stainless steel towel rail and a pedestal sink are fitted on the south wall.

The north wall contains the only window, 1.1m wide, 0.43m deep to the rear of the softwood window frame which is 0.95m wide and 0.88m high. The window comprises both a single fixed and an opening casement, both with wrought iron frames and four saddle bars supporting five registers of three leaded lights held in lead window cames. The opening casement is hung on iron pintles and secured by a revolving turnbuckle catch with a metal backing plate.

The door is 2m high, 0.85m wide and fitted with a vertically planked door with four ledgers. It was hung on iron T-shaped strap hinges and secured with a simple drop latch.

Bathroom, looking west Fig 30

Bedroom 2 (Figs 27, 31)

Bedroom 2 is located in the south-west of the building and measures 4m long east to west and 3.7m wide north to south. The south wall is formed by the ironstone gable of the north-south extension and carries a shallow chimney breast with no fireplace.

The east wall is of roughly faced ironstone that has had up to 12 courses of single leaf brickwork inserted in the upper part of the internal face of the wall raising the wall plate level by up to 0.5m each side of a small stone built gable which holds the only window in the room. The window recess is 1.3m wide at the splay, 0.4m deep and extends 1.8m high above floor level. The softwood window frame is 1.1m wide and 0.88m high and comprises both a single fixed and an opening casement, both with wrought iron frames and four saddle bars supporting five registers of four leaded lights held in lead window cames. The opening casement is hung on iron hinge pintles and had been secured by a revolving turnbuckle catch now lost, only the metal backing plate remains.

The floor is of boards averaging 0.22m wide, painted in a green and white chequer board pattern with occasional Fleur-de Lys motifs.

The north wall is a single thickness plastered brick wall shared with the bathroom. The doorway at the east of this wall gives access to the lobby at the top of the stairs from the kitchen. The doorway is 1.1m wide and 2m high and fitted with a partially burnt vertically planked door with four ledgers. It was hung on iron T-shaped strap hinges and secured with a simple drop latch.

The south-west corner held a modern copper immersion tank in a built in airing cupboard. The remainder of the west and north walls had held fitted wardrobes, now mainly destroyed in the fire.

A modern metal expanding loft ladder lay in the ruins of the west range of wardrobes. No doubt it had given access to the roof space but there is now no indication of where it may have been located within the room.

Bedroom 2, looking north-east Fig 31

The ceiling had been hung under an axial beam aligned north-south and set into the south gable and north walls. This had supported modern softwood joists with a lath and plaster ceiling at about 2.1m above bedroom floor level, sloping down to the wall plate on the east and west walls. Most of the ceiling and supports were lost in the fire.

Bedroom 3 (Figs 16, 27, 32)

Bedroom 3 is located at the north-east end of the building. To the west it abuts the central chimney breast, the east wall is the ironstone east gable of the main building. It is up to 5.1m long east to west and 2.7m wide north to south. The south wall is a stud wall with two leaves of lath and plaster forming a division with bedroom 4 to the south. This stud wall is aligned east west along the line of the axial beam exposed in the dining room below.

The doorway is located at the west of the south wall and is 1.8m high and 0.85m wide and fitted with a vertically planked wooden door with four ledgers. It was hung on T-shaped strap hinges and secured with a simple drop latch.

The north wall curves along its length and contains the only window. The window was 2.0m wide at the splay, 0.9m high and 0.45m to the rear of the window frame. None of the window frame survived.

Bedroom 3, looking west Fig 32

The floor is a mix of new and re-used wooden boards between 0.22m and 0.28m wide. The skirting along the north wall has had a shallow fillet added along the bottom indicating that the floor has had a long and serious problem of sagging. Following the fire and 'damping down' the floor now sags almost 0.4m below the horizontal and has had to be supported by planks and ACRO props in the Dining Room below. The room was declared 'unsafe' and access was restricted to the area around the doorway only.

The east wall retains a shallow chimney breast but no fireplace. Timber boxing to the north of the chimney contains modern heating pipes.

The remaining plasterwork on the east gable indicates that the lath and plaster ceiling had been at about 2.1m above the original room level and had sloped down to the wall plate along the north wall. The whole room ceiling had been lost in the fire.

Bedroom 4 (Figs 16, 27, 33)

Bedroom 4 lies immediately south of Bedroom 3 and occupies the south-east corner of the building. It is 3.76m long east to west and varies in width between 3.04m at the east, 3.42m in the centre and 3.27m wide at the west of the room.

The east gable retains a shallow chimney breast with a Victorian fireplace containing an iron grate. The north wall is a lath and plaster stud wall shared with bedroom 4.

The south wall is of coursed ironstone 1.6m high rising to 1.8m over the window at the south-west of the room. Immediately below the east edge of the window, the wall 'steps' out and curves by 0.4m from the main axis of the building. To the west of the window, the wall 'steps down' in two increments to the wall plate at about 1.1m above floor level. This part of the wall was badly disturbed by the collapse of the roof timbers and exact measurements were not possible.

Bedroom 4, looking south-west Fig 33

The wooden floor is boarded with new and re-used planks of varying widths and length cut and fitted to accommodate swells and dipping of the floor along the length of the room.

The only window is located at the south-west corner of the room, it is 1.0m wide at the splay, 0.45m deep, 0.88m high and 0.90m wide at the rear of the softwood window frame. The window comprises both a single fixed and an opening casement, both with wooden frames and two saddle bars supporting three registers of two leaded lights held in lead window cames. The opening casement is hung on iron pintles and had been secured by a simple metal hook and eye.

The doorway is located at the south-west of the room and gives access onto the landing. It is 2.0m high and 0.74m wide, fitted with a vertically planked door with three ledgers. A single small glass 'light' 0.25m high and 0.1m wide was set above the top ledger in the centre of the door. The glass has been lost but the putty remains *in situ*. The door was hung on iron T-shaped strap hinges and secured with a narrow mortise lock and a simple drop latch.

5.3 The second floor

Bedroom 5 (Figs 16, 27, 34)

Bedroom 5, looking north-east Fig 34

Virtually the whole of the second floor structure had been lost in the fire. Only a fraction of floor at the top of the stairway at the south-west corner of the room survived.

From the surviving plasterwork on the east gable and the east face of the central chimney stack, it is possible to surmise that bedroom 5 was about 5.1m long east to west and about 2.0m wide at ceiling height. The ceiling sloped with the internal angle of the roof joists and appears to have a maximum width a floor level of about 4.0m. The ceiling appears to have been lath and plaster with a height of about 2.1m.

There are two windows in the east gable, one each side of the central chimney breast. Both are 0.65m wide at the splay, 0.95m high, 0.4m deep and 0.5m wide at the front of the softwood window frame. Both windows comprised a single, wrought iron framed opening casement with four saddle bars supporting five registers of two leaded lights held in lead window cames. Both windows are secured by revolving turnbuckle catches with a metal back plate. The south window has an external hook and eye to secure the window when open.

No other features of this room survived.

6 CONCLUSIONS

It is clear that the fire, firefighting and the subsequent 'damping down' and clearance of the building has resulted in the loss of much of the fabric of this historic building. In particular, roof timbers and the single surviving cruck blade have been lost, damaged or compromised in their ability to provide dating for the earliest phases of the building's history.

It is also clear that there has been repeated alteration to the building in its long life, much of it with little regard for the historic fabric or the maintenance of high building standards. Replacement stonework is poorly matched and coursed and invariably stands out against the older fabric of the building. Ongoing patchwork repairs and pointing have been carried out using cement mortar with obvious deterioration to the surrounding stonework. Holes caused by mortar bees have been filled with modern mastic filler with no thought of the longer term implications for the stonework.

While the fire has opened the roof space for archaeological recording, its destruction of the building and roof fabric has removed much of the potential evidence such a survey would normally record.

Evidence recorded in 1977 and resulting in the Grade II Listing of the building has been irretrievably lost. The assertion that this building dates from the 15th century is now unsupported by any surviving evidence in the present structure. Indeed, the majority of the surviving datable evidence indicates only major alterations in the 18th or 19th century with further alterations in the late 20th century. If approached for the first time now, there is nothing to suggest any history prior to the early 18th century.

The map of 1748 indicates that the building in it's present outline form was present and formed part of a range of buildings around a large yard open to the east. As the house appears to have been built as a dwelling, it seems likely that the other buildings formed a range of barns, animal hovels and stores, associated with farming. It is recorded at this time as Ridgeway Farm (although the geographical location does not invite such a designation and there is no 'Ridgeway' listed in the Militia Rolls for the period). By the time of the Tithe Apportionment map of 1840, the farm or ancillary buildings have been cleared and the house alone now occupies the plot.

On the 1887 and 1900 Ordnance Survey First and Second Edition mapping of the area, the house appears as three separate dwellings with a range of ancillary buildings extending south of the west range. This format remained almost unaltered until major refurbishment and alterations in the 1990s.

Architects drawings for alterations to the buildings in 1995 include a certified copy of a building plan included with the sale and conveyance of the property from the Althorp estate to a private buyer in 1977. At that time the building was still divided into three separate dwellings. Circa 1995, the building was extensively altered and refurbished to again be a single dwelling.

6.1 Phase 1: Medieval beginnings

Little has survived to corroborate or refute the assertion made during recording in 1977 that the house contained evidence of an open hall with medieval beginnings. While this may be true, the current recording cannot contribute to a discussion on this matter. Little remains of the timber described in 1977 as a cruck, while the loss of the thatch and the roof timbers removed the 'sooting' evidence which went hand in hand with that timber. To complete the removal of the evidence, the floors were reduced by 300mm in 1995 and replaced in concrete.

6.2 Phase 2: The earliest surviving fabric – Pre 1748

The main structure is a rectangular east-west range built of roughly dressed ironstone laid in regular courses of varying thickness. It is a single build with stone gables at the east and west and, according to the 1977 recording, a raised cruck supporting the ridge beams over the centre of the house. Both the north and south walls are built over shallow plinths, these are not carried through to the gable walls.

The supposed raised cruck is a fortuitous survival although barely 1.5m of the timber survived the fire. The carved ball stop is interesting but does not give a firm frame for dating. The use of a cruck may be considered an early feature, but as a means of supporting lower end vernacular buildings, it does survive into the late 18th and early 19th centuries. In the absence of any of the remainder of the cruck blades, it is impossible to be sure whether the cruck was new when used or if it is merely a cut-down remnant from a cruck removed from elsewhere. There is a long tradition of buying and selling individual bays of buildings and then of re-using or re-building them (Dyer 1994).

If development from a medieval open hall was provable, then the following scenario would follow on as a third phase. As the hall gave way to a two floor arrangement, the central hearth would have been covered over with a daub or stone firehood or cover with a chimney. There is no evidence for such an arrangement and the standing inglenook appears to be integral to the layout of the pre-1748 building. In its present condition, no butt joints or other evidence of it being a late insertion were present.

6.3 Phase 3: The alterations in the period 1748 – 19th century

The plan of the inglenook is of a style entirely in keeping with the early 18th century, located adjacent to a stair in the local fashion. On present evidence it is impossible to state if it is integral in the build or added to upgrade an earlier chimney arrangement.

The position of the central chimney located against the remnant vestiges of the cruck and braces supports the idea of a late insertion.

By this stage the house has the simple plan of a vernacular 3-cell cottage. Evidence of any medieval precursor was fast disappearing, although a matching window in the north wall gives the appearance of a cross-passage from the door in the south wall, although there is no evidence there was ever a door opening in the north wall at this location.

6.4 Phase 4: Alterations 19th century to 1995 – creating three tenancies

Locally, the introduction of heating into first floor rooms in vernacular cottages is a 19th-century phenomenon, related to the growing availability of coal to all sections of society. Even in areas of high status use, the chimney stacks are usually of brick.

Here too, the appearance of fireplaces is coincident with chimney stacks being built in brick and the arrangement of first floor rooms has survived to the date of the recent fire.

When, sometime between 1840-1887, the house was divided into three tenements, there arose a need to provide heating for not one but three sets of tenants. Thus the bays that form east and west ends of the building were both provided with ground and first floor hearths against the gable walls.

Some of these were subsequently probably altered to account for new partition walls as tenants altered their living arrangements to suit their needs. Individual hearths were also dispensed with on the same basis (such as in the snug and in bedroom 3).

Throughout this period, early fireplaces remained in position although their role probably changed. Thus the large fireplace in the south-west wall in the modern kitchen was probably always that, but went from serving a single household to one sub-tenancy, and then back to a single household.

6.5 Phase 5: Re-conversion of 1995 back to a single dwelling

The last phase of works caused major changes to the fabric and layout of the house, removing part of the evidence for the sub-division into three in *c*1840-1887. The phase plan shows what remains of the 1840-1887 structure and alterations and highlights what has been inserted to re-order the living arrangements as they now stand.

6.6 Fixtures and fittings

No fixtures or fittings survived of a pre- 19th century date. Early window panes, catches and stays are of patterns which can be seen today throughout the village and are dated elsewhere to the 19th century, as are some hinges (Hall 2005, 52). None of the numerous window cames noted have identifiable milling-marks with which to date them before *c*1800.

6.7 General observations

The house has elements surviving from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries.

- From the 18th century there is the basic ironstone-built envelope with its characteristic gable-kneelers, seen throughout the county.
- From the 19th century there is a widespread introduction of bricks, used to divide the single house into three tenancies
- From the 20th century comes most of the details and decor, the infilling of cupboard spaces, the introduction of pipework and the alterations to the 19th century sub-divisions.

Nothing survives to corroborate the assertion that the house has origins in the medieval period. While this remains possible, the alterations of the 19th and 20th centuries, followed by the fire in 2010 have removed any possible evidence.

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