



# Northamptonshire Archaeology

## Archaeological building assessment of The Cottage, Hellidon Grange Hellidon, Northamptonshire March-April 2012



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Northamptonshire  
County Council

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Report 12/84

April 2012



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**QUALITY CONTROL**

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Checked by	Pat Chapman		
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**OASIS REPORT FORM 124525**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project name	Archaeological building assessment of The Cottage, Hellidon Grange, Hellidon, Northamptonshire	
Short description	The Cottage at Hellidon Grange is a brick built structure of c1850 which for c120 years was a stable until, but for minor alteration and following its disuse, was converted into a house in 1972. It was extensively altered for this change of use and nothing of its previous identity can now be discerned. The interiors are a mixture of 1970s and subsequent decor. Adjacent brick sheds were also formerly stable but these too lack any remains from their former use.	
Project type	Archaeological Building Assessment/ Heritage Asset Survey	
Site status	Listed Grade II* by curtilage (Listing: Hellidon SP 5158 13/98, The Grange)	
Previous work	None	
Current Land use	Unoccupied property	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type/ period	Stable converted to house	
Significant finds	No	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	The Cottage, Hellidon Grange, Little Back Lane, Hellidon, Northamptonshire, NN11 6GD	
Study area (sq.m or ha)	c150 sq m	
OS Easting & Northing	SP 5152 5800	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator		
Project Design originator	Iain Soden, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor		
Project Manager	Iain Soden	
Sponsor or funding body	Mr and Mrs Harris	
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>		
Start date	March 2012	
End date	April 2012	
<b>ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Location (Accession no.)</b>	<b>Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)</b>
Physical	Northants Archaeol	Room Record sheets
Paper	Northants Archaeol	B/W negs and contact sheets
Digital	Northants Archaeol	Digital photo images
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
Unpublished client report (NA report)		
Title	Archaeological building assessment of The Cottage, Hellidon Grange, Hellidon, Northamptonshire, March-April 2012	
Serial title & volume	12/84	
Author(s)	Iain Soden	
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Date	30 April 2012	

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL BUILDING ASSESSMENT OF  
THE COTTAGE, HELLIDON GRANGE,  
HELLIDON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE  
MARCH-APRIL 2012**

***Abstract***

*The Cottage at Hellidon Grange is a brick built structure of c1850 which for c120 years was a stable until, but for minor alteration and following its disuse, was converted into a house in 1972. It was extensively altered for this change of use and nothing of its previous identity can now be discerned. The interiors are a mixture of 1970s and subsequent decor. Adjacent brick sheds were also formerly stable but these too lack any remains from their former use.*

**1 INTRODUCTION**

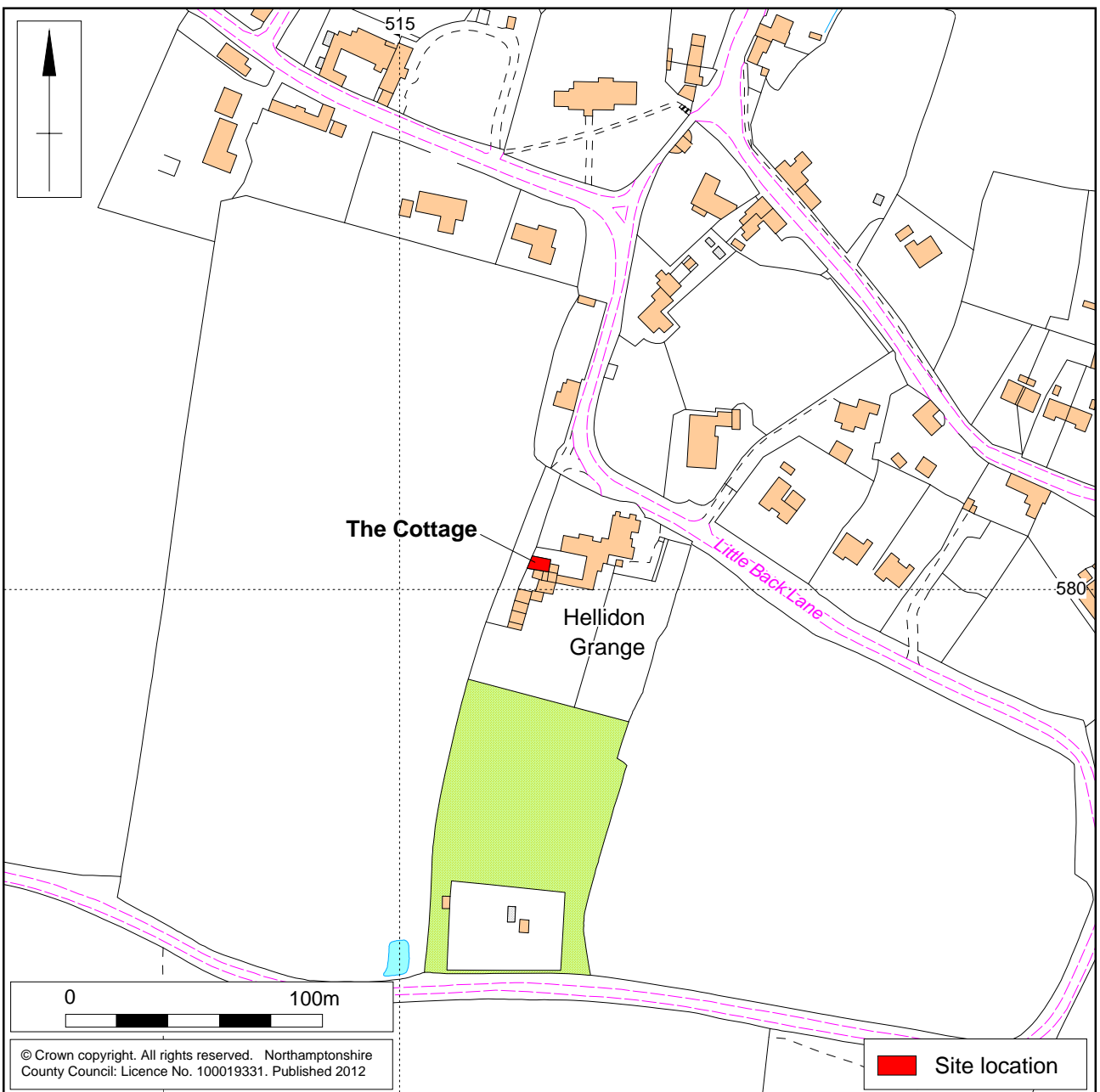
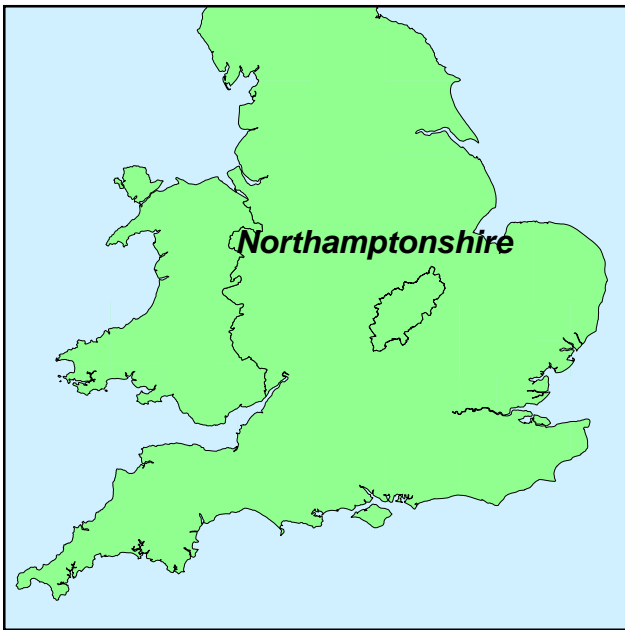
Mr and Mrs Harris have recently purchased Hellidon Grange and wish to upgrade the living accommodation at the adjacent Cottage, for family use. The cottage lies adjacent to the main dwelling of Hellidon Grange, a Grade II\* Listed Building with a core designed by the celebrated architect of the High Victorian Movement, William Butterfield. The Grange complex, which was originally designed to comprise a Vicarage and an adjoining school, being a typical Butterfield juxtaposition, was built from c1850 around an earlier vernacular building. It continued to be extended until the school was closed by the Church, whereupon, with the vicarage then thought too big, it was sold in 1910 as a home, which it has remained ever since. From 1966 until 2009 it was the home of Lord and Lady Dent, who were responsible for converting The Cottage from a former stable in 1972.

The property of 'The Cottage' is not a Listed Building in its own right, and is entirely absent from the Listing Description, but is considered listed by virtue of its presence on the curtilage of Hellidon Grange. Through their architects, Roger Coy Partnership of Eydon, Northamptonshire, the new owners commissioned Northamptonshire Archaeology to undertake an archaeological assessment of the buildings affected by their planning proposals by way of surveying the Cottage as an historic asset in its own right and assessing what heritage assets it might contain or encompass, which might merit preservation or enhancement.

The building has stood unoccupied for a while and at the time of survey contained no furniture or trappings of previous ownership or tenancy. Full access was available on the ground and first floors but the roof space was not accessed. There is a small courtyard garden in front of the Cottage, but which contained no undergrowth to prevent access or views.

The Cottage and its ancillary buildings are all of brick, with the cottage having a pitched clay tile roof and the adjacent sheds having a single-fall roof of Welsh slate.

The Cottage stands at NGR: SP 5152 5800, adjacent to a gravel drive leading off Little Back Lane, Hellidon (Fig 1).



Scale 1:2,500

Site location Fig 1

## 2 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The general objectives of the assessment were:

- To provide a summary written, photographic and simple drawn (plan) appraisal of the historic resource which constitutes the building;
- To provide information about the historic development of the building, in order to constitute a summary archive record of its fabric before conversion;
- To assess the relative significance and date of its constituent parts, fixtures and fittings with a view to the future retention or discard of these features during the upgrading of the property.

The current report includes a simple development plan of the building and an analysis of the function of (some of) the individual rooms and their working where such evidence exists.

This assessment of the building primarily took the form of a photographic record to set out the relationship of the building and its constituent parts and by the use of architects' plans, annotated on site and later phased in conjunction with historic maps and other documents, provided by the new owners and sourced within the Northamptonshire Record Office. The buildings were assessed within the general precepts set out in the English Heritage procedural guidance (*Understanding historic buildings: a guide to good recording practice*, 2006), approximating to Level II. In particular the records made as part of the work conformed to the following:

Written and drawn accounts comprised free-text notes made on site on pre-printed forms and annotation of existing surveyor's plans. These later formed the basis of the interpretative plans reproduced in this report.

The photographic record employed both general and specific photographs to show exteriors, interiors and specific items and fixtures/fittings, if significant. Both Black and white negative media was used (for archive purposes) and digital media (for reporting and complementary purposes).

## 3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### 3.1 Historic maps

A short sequence of historic maps illustrates the site and is instructive for tracing the origins and development of the Cottage and the adjoining group of ancillary buildings, all of which serve the adjacent Hellidon Grange.

Two early maps of the village exist and quite clearly show that the building did not exist at the time of mapping. These are the 1775 Inclosure Map of Hellidon and the 1810 Ordnance Survey Surveyors Map. Both depict the precursor house to the Grange itself but none of the ancillary buildings which stand today had been built. (not illustrated).

A plan of 1853 shows 'Hellidon Vicarage and Crofts'. This clearly shows the Vicarage, the School, and two detached outbuildings, one of which is in exactly the right location and alignment to be The Cottage (Fig 2).



Extract from plan of Hellidon Vicarage, 1853 Fig 2



Ordnance Survey map, 1880s Fig 3



The First Edition Ordnance Survey Map of the 1880s shows that the complex to have reached almost its maximum extent. The cottage is depicted, as is the range of other ancillary buildings to the south (Fig 3).

A schematic plan of the complex was produced for a school prospectus about 1890, giving the designation of each room and space. This shows the entire row of buildings and the correct number of rooms, although the row has been fully aligned for ease of depiction. The plan is not intended to be an accurate scale drawing (Fig 4).

The cottage is easily discerned on this plan and is labelled as a stable, with hay baskets in the corners suitable for tethering four horses in total, in pairs as is standard with a travis or partition between. The entrances are in either gable end. Another stable stands adjacent which are today the sheds for the Cottage. The small courtyard is shown.

Subsequent Ordnance Survey Maps, such as that of 1925, show no change to this layout. The 1925 map shows the construction of lean-to greenhouses to the east and south of the sheds (Fig 5).

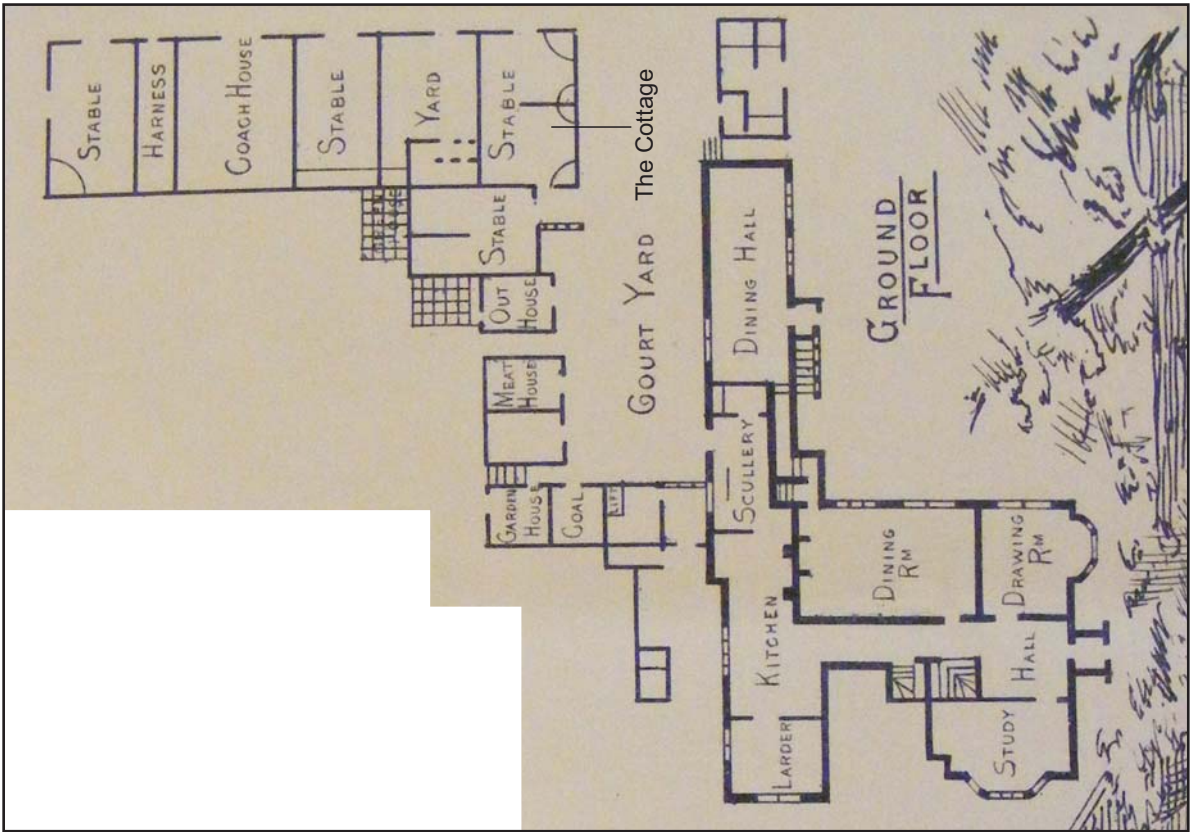
### **3.2 Other documents**

As a former, very ordinary ancillary building, the Cottage has never been afforded any real attention so has never (apart from the abovementioned prospectus) warranted individual depiction. Since it stands at the back of the Grange, it was almost always hidden from view in photographs. Views from the gardens in the period 1925-35 do show the greenhouses which once backed onto the sheds, but the stables are obscured in these views.

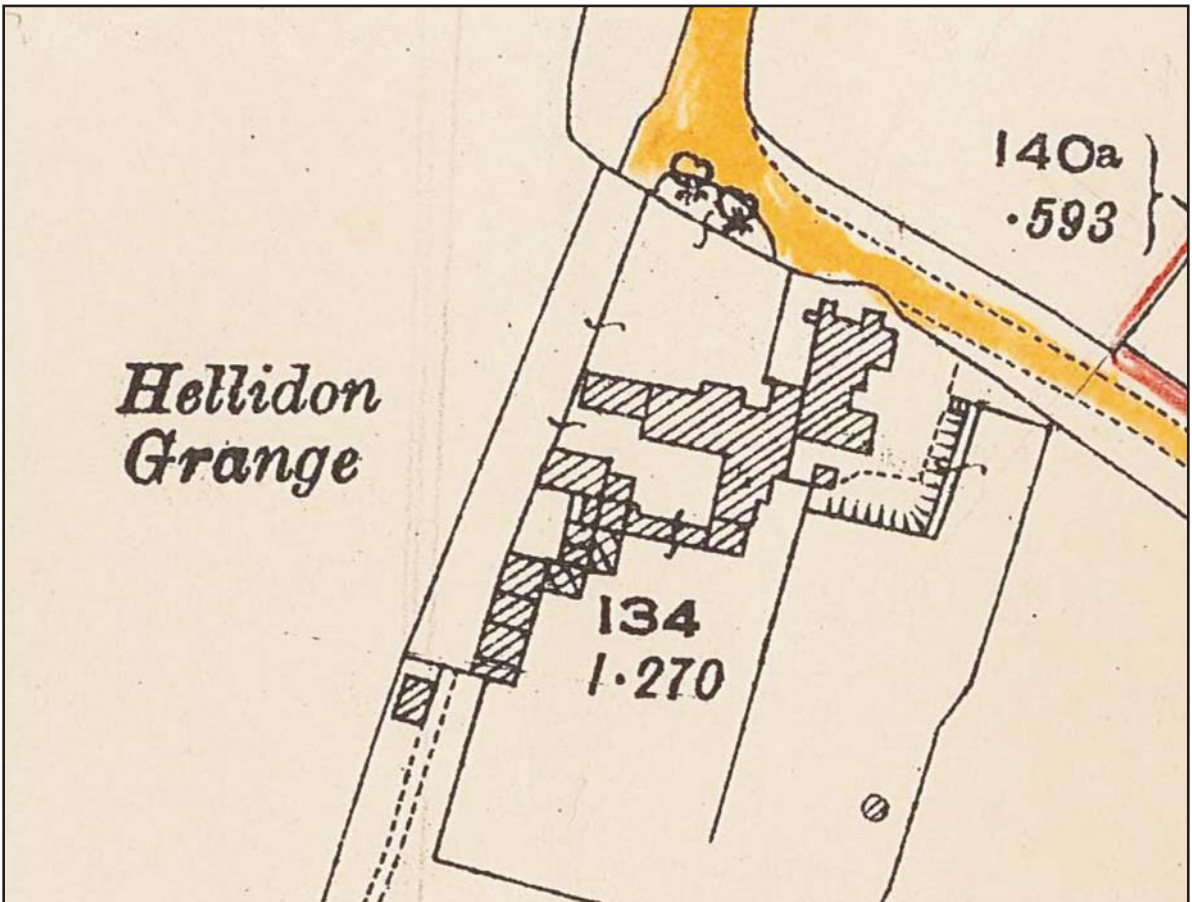
However, in the 1960s an oblique aerial view of the house emerged which does show the Cottage, although it is very tiny and relatively indistinct. The photograph was taken looking eastwards, so shows the western gable. The lowest portion is obscured by what is probably a hedge or other undergrowth. Above this can be made out a small door or hatch, at a height which suggests it gave access to a hayloft. Near to the apex of the gable is a dark patch on the photograph which may be an owl-hole, but this is too indistinct to be certain. No other detail is apparent and the photo is not illustrated here.

Plans survive which show the conversion of the stable into the Cottage, together with all of the planning documentation from the Estate of Mr and Mrs Dent, including their correspondence and permissions from Daventry Rural District Council (Planning Application no DR/72/311). The preliminaries for the Planning Application were drawn up in 1971 and invoices show the work, by England and Fox, Builders, from Rugby to have all been complete in 1973. It was aided by a grant from Daventry Rural District Council (no 421).

These documents indicate the structural alterations which were necessary for conversion such as building a chimney and porch, blocking former stable doorways, putting in damp-proofing and slightly raising the roof to accommodate a full first floor. They also include the insertion of all the standard off-the-peg window joinery which survives today. It shows that the interiors were fully imported and standardised from builders' catalogues and sets down the interior layout broadly as it is found currently. The only exception is the kitchen, which has been re-fitted since 1972, from widely available flat-packs probably in the mid-late 1980s.



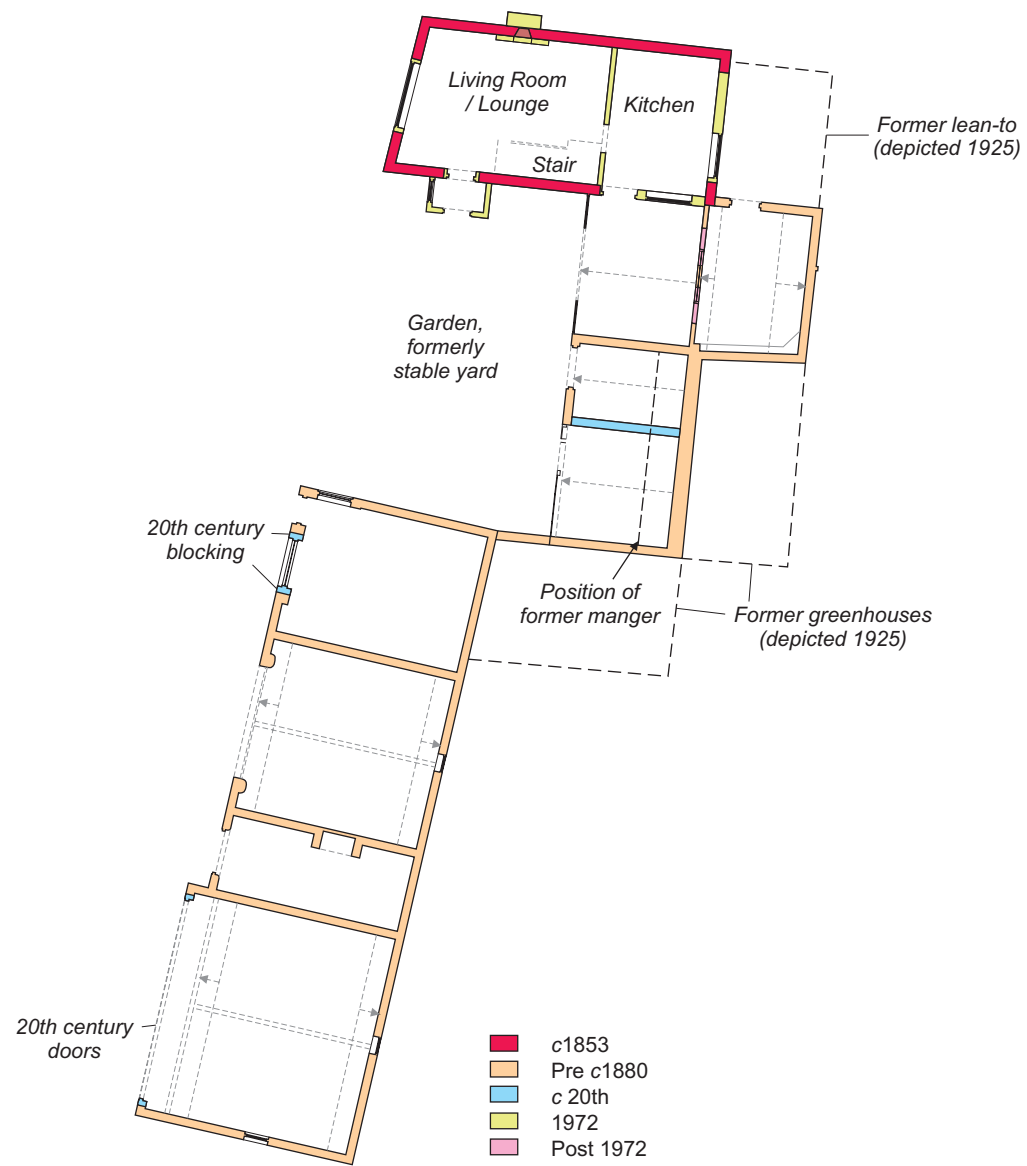
Late 19th-century plan of Hellidon Grange (school prospectus) Fig 4



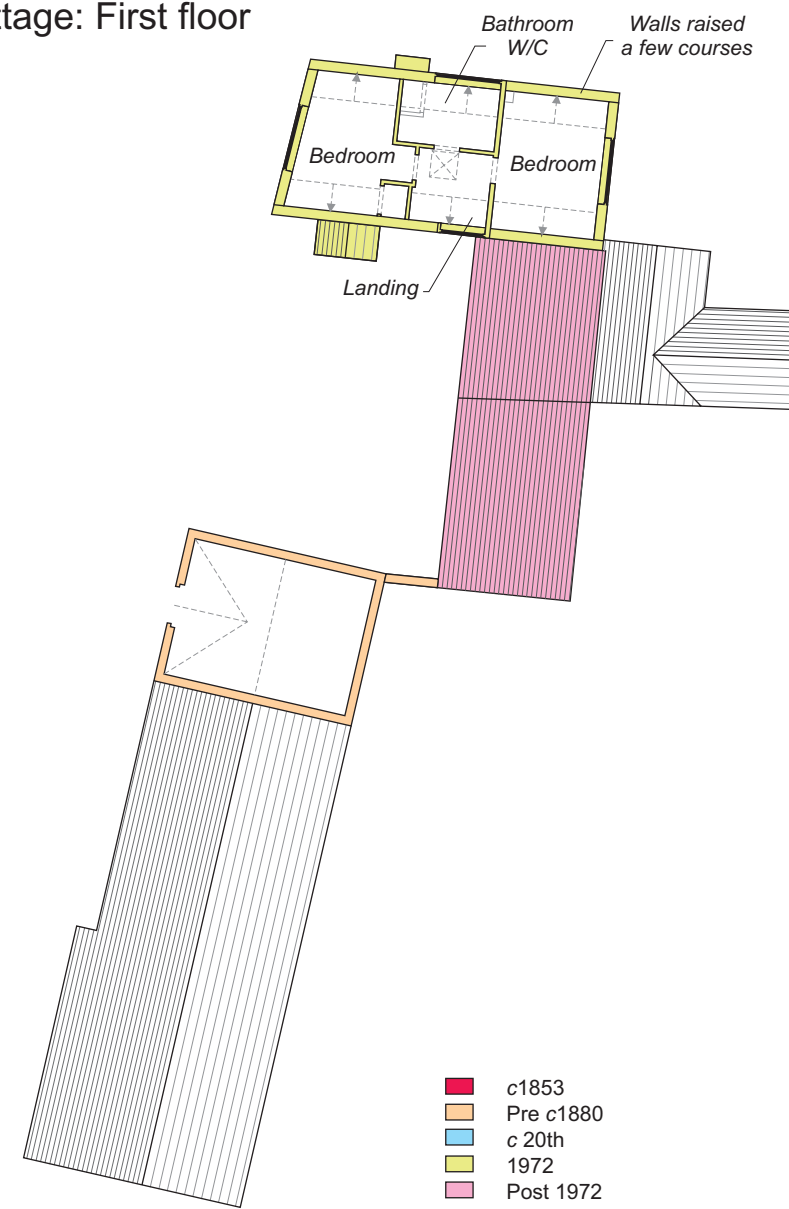
Ordnance Survey map, 1925 Fig 5



### The Cottage: Ground floor



### The Cottage: First floor



## 4 BUILDING ASSESSMENT

### 4.1 The exterior

The west gable of the cottage, at a slightly eccentric angle to the other walls of the building, faces the private gravelled access lane alongside Hellidon Grange (Fig 6). It presents a plain red-brick aspect with simple modern timber casement windows at ground and first floor levels beneath concrete lintels (Fig 7). Ivy obscures some of the first-floor brickwork, which is of Flemish Garden Wall Bond, also sometimes called Sussex Bond. There are closers at the corners. Clear mortar/cement changes show where the windows and their lintels have been inserted.



The Cottage, west gable Fig 7

The north-facing long axis of the building looks into the courtyard garden, entered through a wooden gate in a brick perimeter wall with Staffordshire Blue engineering brick half-moon cappings. The brickwork of the facade is unremarkable, of Flemish Garden Wall Bond, and clearly exhibits colour and mortar changes where modern windows have been inserted, and where the eaves have been raised as part of the 1972 conversion from a stable. At ground floor level the brickwork has been rendered close to the kitchen window, which looks out into a utility room lean-to made out of the courtyard's north-east corner. The principal entrance into the Cottage is in this side, through a brick and timber porch with a pitched roof, the whole arrangement entirely of 1972 (Fig 8).

The east gable of the building is not dissimilar from the west but it does not share the same slightly eccentric layout, being fully square with the long axes of the building. The modern timber casement windows with their concrete lintels have been inserted, the first floor example requiring the dismantling of the entire gable apex to put in. A line of Staffordshire Blue engineering bricks marks the base of that lower portion of gable wall rebuilt as part of the 1972 works. There was formerly a lean-to which covered the area outside this gable end, shown on the 1925 Ordnance Survey map, the scars of its roof being visible on the adjacent (Fig 9).



The cottage, north side      Fig 8



The Cottage, east gable      Fig 9



The cottage, south side Fig 10

The south-facing long axis is very plain, devoid of windows before the 1972 bathroom window was inserted within the contemporary raising of the eaves (Fig 10). A single vertical joint in the brickwork near the south-western corner marks a probable previous opening, although no such reveal is shown on the late 19th century prospectus plan. The tall chimney at about the midpoint of the wall was attached as part of the 1972 conversion, having a characteristic blue engineering brick damp proof course.

#### 4.1 The interior

The downstairs is entirely of 1972. The floor is of vinyl tiles on concrete. Plasterwork is modern, with woodchip wallpaper to finish. Woodwork is stained pine, including the pre-fabricated open-tread stair. The interior doors are hollow plywood-faced and finished with contemporary modern door furniture. A local stone fireplace with stained pine mantle-shelf surrounds a gas fire venting into the chimney attached to the west wall (Fig 11).



The Cottage, ground floor interior Fig 11



The Cottage, first floor interior Fig 12

Upstairs the interior has identical finishes to downstairs. The floor is of pine tongue and groove floorboards. The interior throughout has storage-heating radiators. There is a modern suite in the bathroom. The single-glazed windows are all accessible from the interior and all are off-the-peg builders' catalogue-derived types as specified in the 1971-2 plans (Fig 12).

#### 4.3 Adjacent sheds

Adjacent to the cottage a pair of brick-built lean-to garden sheds with a Welsh slate roof began life as stables, retaining interior holes in the brickwork where a former timber manger/hay rack socketed into the walls. The building had been divided into two by a brick wall. It was otherwise devoid of detail (Fig 13). The doors and timber front had been replaced as the current ledged and braced doors are unsuitable for stable use, being far too thin and rickety, and lacking the standard two-part stable-door configuration. This outbuilding is much decayed. To both its rear (east) and its end (south) on the far side once stood two large lean-to greenhouses, as shown on the 1925 OS map, from which deep beds and cordoned fruit trees can still be seen in the gardens. The roof is Welsh slate but has been re-set on modern pine rafters.



The Cottage, adjacent shed Fig 13



The Cottage, utility room Fig 14



The Cottage, blocked windows at rear of utility room (from west side) Fig 15

Between the cottage and the former stable is a post-1972 timber, glass and perspex lean-to which has been used as a utility room and store (Fig 14). The small brick, pitch-roofed 19th-century brick store against which it is built, formerly had two windows in it but these were bricked-in no earlier than 1972 and the wall heightened to allow for the greater height of the lean-to (Fig 15). One of the lean-to's double, sliding doors has been broken off its rails. The rather flimsy construction as a whole has begun to disintegrate.



## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The cottage comprises a brick shell of just before c1853, originally one of a number of stables serving the adjacent Grange. There is nothing left to suggest its functional origins.

The entire building was stripped out and converted into a home in 1972 in accordance with Planning Permissions granted by the then Daventry Rural District Council.

Adjacent sheds were also once part of the group of stables, but these too have all but lost the evidence of this former use.

## 6 SIGNIFICANCE: SCHEDULE OF POTENTIAL FOR RETENTION AND REUSE

There are no fixtures, fittings or finishes which are considered original to either the cottage or its adjacent sheds. The only enduring integrity to the cottage in both its original and its 1972 converted state is the plan-form, the height having been raised at conversion. It seems to have always had a first floor, even when a stable c1853-1972 (as evidenced by the hay-loft door in the above-mentioned 1960s aerial photo). Original brickwork is workmanlike and of a distinctive bond. Later work is largely sufficiently different to be differentiated with ease.

The adjacent sheds are probably of the second half of the 19th century. Although the c1890 prospectus plan suggests a slightly different internal layout (for which there is no evidence), and that depiction is schematic; the sheds which survive are clearly those on the 1925 OS map. They too have lost their stable-origins totally and, like the Cottage itself, only their basic footprint has any longevity at all.

The flimsy utility room, which lies between the cottage and the sheds, is of post-1972 date is an organic accretion and has no architectural or historic merit.

It is notable that the buildings described above are tightly grouped along two sides of a courtyard garden off the trackway to the side of the Grange, the third side being formed by a similar range. It is all meant to face away from the Grange and to be ignored by daily life there. This courtyard began life as the relatively pungent and noisy stable-yard from 1853 and this open space, for grooming, shoeing and mucking-out, hemmed in on three sides, and viewed from two of them, has perhaps been as much a hallmark of the ensemble as are overall ground-plan of the buildings themselves.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Northamptonshire Archaeology would like to thank Mr and Mrs Harris for the fullest access to the Cottage and loan of historic photos of the Grange and Cottage and Roger Coy Partnership for their introduction to the property.



Northamptonshire County Council

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