

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

HISTORIC BUILDING ASSESSMENT: SHENLEY DENS FARMHOUSE CALVERTON ROAD WHADDON MILTON KEYNES

on behalf of Persimmon Homes



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November 2007

ASC: 992/SDF/1

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Site Data

ASC project code:	SDF		ASC Project No:	992	
County:		Milton K	leynes		
Village/Town:		Whaddor	Whaddon		
Civil Parish:		Shenley	Church End		
NGR (to 8 figs):		SP 8083	SP 8083 3638		
Present use:		Derelict	Derelict		
Planning proposal:		N/A			
Planning application	Planning application ref/date:		N/A		
Local Planning Authority:		Milton Keynes			
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Client:		Persimm	on Homes		
Client's Agent:		Bidwells 4 Waters			
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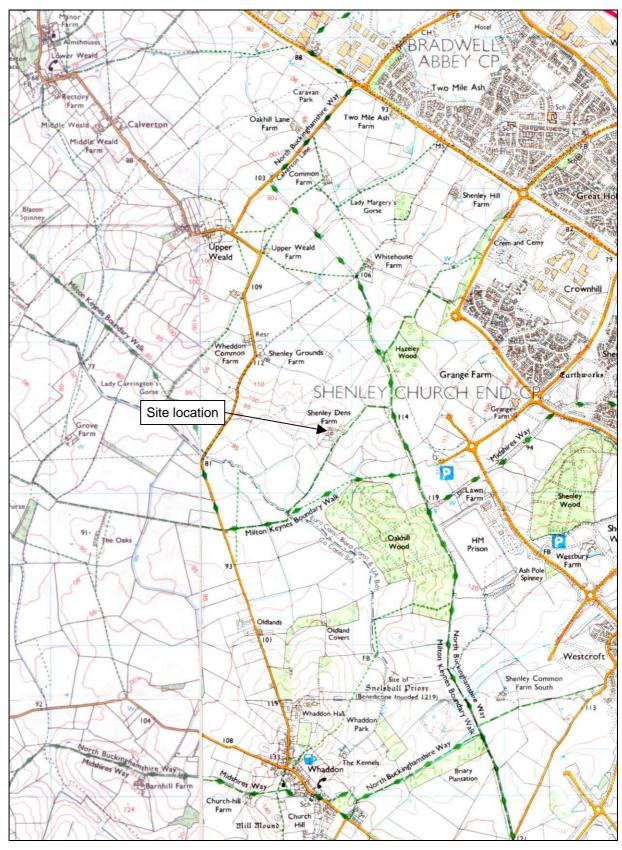


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In October 2007 an historic building assessment was carried out for the farmhouse at Shenley Dens Farm, Shenley Church End, Milton Keynes, to inform proposals for the future of the building, particularly in relation to its relatively recent Grade II listing.

Shenley Dens Farmhouse is a two -storey brick building with cellar and attics, under a series of tiled roofs. It lies in the southwest corner of the rectangular farmyard, which is bounded by a series of single-storey buildings on the other three sides. Shenley Dens Farmhouse appears to have been constructed in the late 18th/early 19th century on the site of an earlier building, probably represented by the stone cellar. The timberwork in the cellar and elsewhere in the house dates from the early 17th century, and may have been part of this earlier building, which is likely to have been timber built on limestone footings. The listing description reports that the staircase, once the most prominent feature in the house, may have came from Whaddon Hall, which had been rebuilt by Browne Willis in the early 18th century. It also proposed that the farmhouse had been built as a hunting lodge or Dower House for Whaddon Hall and was constructed as a visual focal point to be seen from the hall. The present authors have found no evidence to support the proposed link between the two properties and propose that the development of Shenley Dens Farmhouse was completely independent of Whaddon Hall.

Shenley Dens Farmhouse was heavily restored in the late 20th century culminating in the loss of the lath and plaster walls and ceilings, the original windows and much of the original roofs. Further losses have occurred through recent vandalism, the ballroom has been denuded of all its internal components and structural distress is clearly evident in the western part of the building.

1 Introduction

1.1 In October 2007 Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) carried out historic building assessment of Shenley Dens Farmhouse (NGR SP 8083 3638: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by *Bidwells* on behalf of Persimmon Homes, and was carried out in accordance with ASC's Standard Method Statement for historic building assessments (Appendix 1), following discussions with the client.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This building assessment project has been requested in response to the recent listing of the farmhouse. The listing description which was revised following a full inspection the same year. Both descriptions appear below (section 2.6).

1.3 Location

Shenley Dens Farm is located in the civil parish of Shenley Church End, in the unitary authority of Milton Keynes (Fig. 1). The site lies c.2.2km east of the village of Shenley Church End, to which it has no direct access, and about the same distance north of Whaddon, from which it is accessed by a long concrete track from Calverton Road. The farmhouse lies in the southwest corner of the rectangular farmyard, which is bounded by a series of single-storey buildings on the other three sides.

1.4 Description

Shenley Dens Farmhouse is a two-storey brick building with cellar and attics, under a tiled roof. The rendered front aspect of the building faces south. The house comprises a south range of three bays with an east-west gabled roof and single-storey extensions to east and west, and a three-bay north range under three north-south gabled roofs.

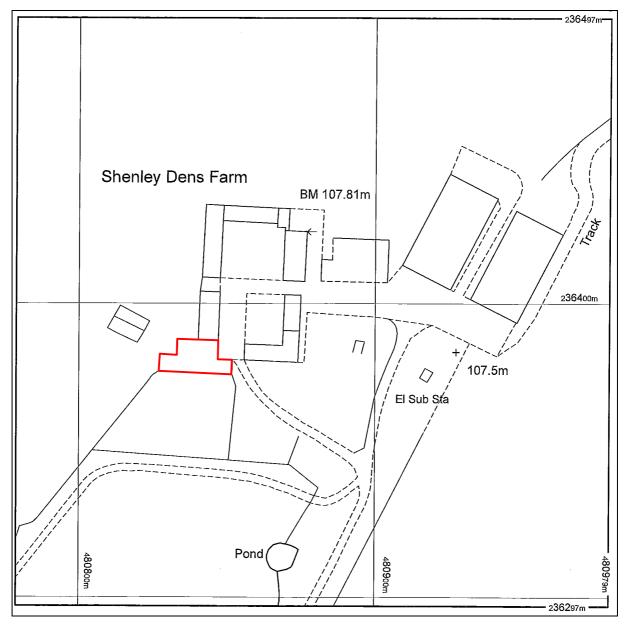


Figure 2: Site location (scale 1:1.250)

2 Historical Background

2.1 General

Shenley Dens Farmhouse is an isolated building both in terms of its place in the historical record as well as its geographical location. Research undertaken for this assessment in the Local Studies section of Milton Keynes Library, in ASC's own library and on the internet has revealed little information relating to the farm itself, though the history of the Shenleys is itself quite well documented (e.g. VCH 1927; Ivens in Croft & Mynard 1993, 131-143).

Shenley Dens (alternatively 'Shenleydens') is located in the modern civil parish of Shenley Church End, which along with the adjoining civil parish of Shenley Brook End forms a large part of the south-west quarter of Milton Keynes. Until the 19th century Church End and Brook End were townships or endships of the ecclesiastical parish of Shenley (Ivens 1993, 131). The name 'Shenley' derives from the Old English *scienan-leage*, meaning 'bright clearing', indicating that the area was once heavily wooded (*ibid*, 134).

2.2 *Medieval* (1066-1500)

The Domesday survey (1086) records four separate holdings in Shenley, two in Brook End and two in Church End. The latter were held by one Hugh, of Hugh, Earl of Chester. The principal manor was probably associated with Manor Farm or the motteand bailey earthwork in Oakhill Road known as 'Shenley Toot'. Church End has also been known as 'Over Shenley' (it lies north of Brook End, and is marginally larger) and 'Shenley Maunsell', after the Maunsell family, who held lands in Shenley during the later 12th and 13th centuries (VCH 1927, 445-456). In the late 13th century the Shenleys passed to Sir Richard de la Vache, whose son, also Richard, died in 1366. At this time the manor passed by marriage to Richard, Lord Grey de Wilton, of Water Hall, Bletchley

2.3 *Post-Medieval & Modern* (1500-present)

The Shenleys remained in the hands of the de Grey family into the early 16^{th} century, when the manor was held briefly by a succession of owners before being purchased by the Pigott family of Whaddon Hall. In 1541 the Piggotts conveyed the Shenleys to the crown, in exchange for Chicksands Priory, Beds, and lands at Kettering. In 1563 Elizabeth I granted the estate to Sir Edmund Ashfield, who died *c*.1600, leaving the estate to his daughter, who was married to Sir John Fortescue of Salden, James I's chancellor of the exchequer. The Fortescues held Shenley until it was sold to John Knapp, a London merchant, in *c*.1700. The Knapp family held the Shenleys into the 19^{th} century. Beyond this date, the historical record for the Shenleys is silent until the designation of Milton Keynes in the late 1960s. From the cartographic record (below) there appears to have been little change to the landscape of the parish. Even the emergence of the new city appears to have had little impact on Shenley Dens Farm, which lies beyond the area originally designated for development.

2.4 *Cartographic Evidence*

The earliest surviving map to show the area of the site in any detail is the Salden estate map of 1599 (Bucks Record Society 236: Fig. 3). At this time the farm is not shown: the area in which it now stands is part of an area named as *Berry Field*, shown as belonging to Lord Grey. The track which now forms the access to Shenley Dens Farm appears as a lane leading from Shenley Church End to Nash, and is therefore presumably of some antiquity.

There is no inclosure map for Church End: Ivens (1993, 141) suggests that the township was enclosed at a relatively early date, while the inclosure of Brook End took place much later, in 1762-64. Thomas Jeffreys' map of Buckinghamshire, published in 1770, shows the farm in some detail (Fig. 4). The four buildings shown do not appear to be those now present on site, and may represent an earlier phase of the farm. At this period Shenley Dens was still linked to Shenley Church End, by a lane running in a south-easterly direction past Folly Farm to join Oakhill Road. Bryant's county map of 1825 (Fig. 5) presents a similar picture.

From the available cartographic evidence it seems likely that the present house and farm buildings at Shenley Dens were constructed in the mid 19th century. The Ordnance Survey 6" sheet dated 1885 (Fig. 6) shows the present layout, comprising ranges of farm buildings set around two adjoining rectangular yards, with the house at the south-west corner, a typical 19th-century 'model' farm. This layout appears unchanged, but in greater detail, on the 25" Ordnance Survey sheet for 1925 (Fig. 7). In addition to the main building ranges there are two smaller outbuildings adjacent to the south-east corner of the farm complex, and another smaller building, probably pigsties, to the west of the farmhouse.

The present-day Ordnance Survey plan of the farm (Fig. 2) shows the site has changed little in the last 75 years. Part of the structure at the north-east corner of the farm complex has been demolished, as have the two small buildings to the south-east. Three large modern metal-framed buildings have been constructed to the east of the farm complex, the easternmost overlying the former track to Shenley Church End.

2.5 *Listed Building Description*

The farmhouse was listed Grade II in April 2004 (listing ref. 491737). The listing description is as follows:

Farmhouse. c.1800. Brick, rendered to front elevations. Old clay tile roof, brick and chimneys. 2 storeys and attic.

EXTERIOR: 3 bays, central bay slightly projecting with pediment that has semicircular blank recess at base. Flat first floor band. Central boarded door with semicircular fanlight of petal design. C19 tiled porch has been removed. Flanking tripartite sashes in reveals with cills; Venetian windows above. Central first floor window C19 sash in earlier box frame. To each side, 1-storey wings rendered, tiled roofs. 1 bay, blank recess to left wing, C19 sash to right wing. Side elevations have moulded brick eaves. Rear elevation has 3 2-storey gables, with some C20 replacement windows. Range of single storey C19 farm buildings to rear, C19 but with considerable later alterations and not included in the listing. INTERIOR: Early C18 dogleg staircase with moulded handrail and string carved tread ends, turned balusters, fluted newels. First floor landing has semi-circular arched openings to rear wings flanking panelled door to attic stair, moulded architraves with keyblocks and imposts. Ground floor room to right has inglenook fireplace with bressumer and chamfered ceiling beam. Panelled window shutters to both ground floor rooms. 6-panel doors. Chamfered ceiling beams in cellar.

HISTORY: The house, on rising ground, seemed to have formed the focal point of an avenue of trees and a vista from the Grade II Whaddon Hall (qv). Whaddon Hall was rebuilt c1820, but the earlier house (from which some of the material in Shenley Dens Farmhouse is believed to have come) was built in the early C18 by the antiquarian Browne Willis.

The revised listing description following the full inspection of the building in October 2004 reads:

Dower House now farmhouse c.1760, with alterations. c.2000. Brick, rendered to front elevations late C20. Plain tile roof, external brick gable chimney stacks. 2 storey central block with basement and attic, flanked by single storey wings.

EXTERIOR: Entrance front has 3 windows, central bay slightly projecting with pediment that has blocked semi-circular window. Flat first floor band. Central boarded door with timber fanlight of petal design. C18 doorcase and C19 tiled porch have been removed. Either side are single C20 tripartite windows with glazing bar sashes in reveals with cills. Above a central window with C20 glazing bar sashes flanked by single C20 Venetian windows with glazing bar sashes. Two hipped dormer windows above with C19 2-light casements.

To each side, single storey wings also rendered. Single bay, blank recess to left wing, C19 sash to right wing.

Side elevations have moulded brick eaves.

Rear elevation has three 2-storey gables, with mostly C20 replacement windows. Range of single storey C19 farm buildings attached to the rear, not included in the listing.

INTERIOR: Central early-C18 dogleg staircase with moulded handrail and carved tread ends, with 2 turned balusters per tread, fluted newels. Ground floor has two doors, each with 6 raised & fielded panels and L-hinges. First floor landing has 2 semi-circular arched openings, with moulded architraves, key blocks and impost blocks to rear wings, flanking central door with 6 raised and fielded panels leading to attic stair. Ground floor room to right has inglenook fireplace with bressumer and chamfered ceiling beam.

Chamfered ceiling beams in cellar.

HISTORY: The house, sited on rising ground, was definitely intended to be seen from the main house Whaddon Hall, (q.v.) but it does not form the focal point of an avenue of trees as has been suggested. Whaddon Hall was rebuilt in c.1820, but the earlier house (from which some of the material from Shenley Dens Farmhouse is believed to have come), was built in the early-C18 by the antiquarian Browne Willis.

The house was probably built as a Dower House or secondary house for members of the family living at Whaddon Hall; it became a farmhouse in the mid-C19 when the present farm buildings were added.

Listed as a mid-C18 dower house that retains much of its external character as well as re-used material, such as the very fine early-C18 stair believed to be from Whaddon Hall (q.v.)

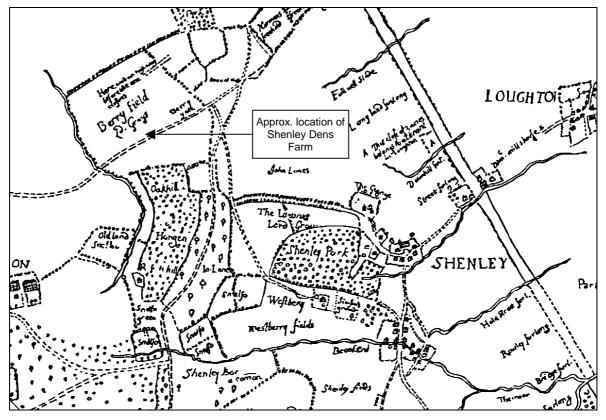


Figure 3: Extract from the Salden Estate map, 1599.



Figure 4: Extract from Thomas Jeffreys' map, 1770.



Figure 5: Extract from Bryant's map, 1825.



Figure 6: Extract from Ordnance Survey 6" sheet, 1885.

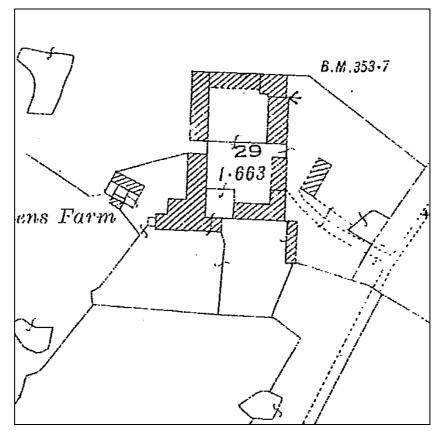


Figure 7: Extract from Ordnance Survey 25" sheet, 1925.

3 Description

3.1 General

The main part of the farmhouse has 2 storeys, an attic and a cellar, all of which is brick built and under clay tiled roofs. The side additions are single storey but otherwise of similar build. The whole rests on a plinth approximately 36cm high. There are chimney stacks with two pots apiece on either side of the main build.

The brickwork is based on a Flemish Bond using hand-made bricks measuring approximately $22 \times 10 \times 6.5$ cm. Some of the bricks have diagonal skintlings, whereas others have horizontal ones, which could either indicate a late 18^{th} -century date for the structure or that a number of bricks have been re-used. There are queen closers at the corner of the walls, but none are apparent around the openings. This may be due to the fact that the windows and doors have been blocked for security purposes.

3.2 *South Elevation* (Fig. 8, Plate 1)

This is the front elevation of the farmhouse, which has a single storey side extension to either side. The walls are rendered but a plat band is still apparent between the ground and first floors. There are four windows on the ground floor and three on the first floor. The window in the eastern extension has been bricked up and rendered. The front door has two steps leading up to it.

3.3 *West Elevation* (Fig. 9, Plates 2-3)

This has no doors in the main build and no openings in the side extension at all. The main build has a window on the ground floor with a timber sill and a soldier course above. The window on the first floor has a timber sill and lintel.

The brickwork is as before, but queen closers were noted on the side of the extension. In addition, the main build has two courses of protruding brickwork under the eaves.

3.4 *East Elevation* (Fig. 10, Plates 4-5)

The east elevation has a door in the rear extension to the south of a window. The door is a later insertion, and the remains of a brick relieving arch can be seen to the left of it. The window on the ground floor and the two above it have timber lintels and sills.

The east elevation of the side addition has no architectural features.

3.5 *North Elevation* (Fig. 11, Plate 6)

The north elevation of the main build has three gables, the western two of which have a window at first floor level and a blocked door in the centre. There is a door and window in the north elevation of the west addition and a window in the eastern addition.

3.6 General Internal Description

As the building had been the focus for vandalism, all of the windows had been blocked and barricaded prior to the survey. Many doors, the stair rails and balustrade had been removed.

It was clear that the building had been extensively modernised in recent years, with new plasterboarding, windows and timberwork in the roof. Many of the rooms have modern torus moulded skirting boards.

3.7 *Cellar* (Fig. 14)

Room C1 (Plates 7-10)

Size: 3.65×2.31 m, height 2.05m

Location: East cellar room

Description: External walls of limestone blocks, internal dividing wall of hand made bricks set in lime mortar. The floor is also of brick. It is accessed by a brick staircase of 11 treads in the north wall. The topmost riser appears to have been reduced in height. The ceiling is of re-used timbers with a chamfered beam (9cm wide straight chamfer) and joists measuring $c.10 \times 10$ cm on 30cm centres. The joists show evidence for lath and plaster. The floorboards above are 24-25cm wide. There is an RSJ along the south wall of the cellar. Two cupboards are located above the axial beams at the northern end of the cellar. There is an opening in the west wall to Cellar C2.

Room C2 (Plates 11-15)

Size: 4.84×4.73 m, height 2.12m

Location: West cellar room

Description: This is similar to C1 in that the walls are stone and the ceiling is of reused timbers. The brick internal wall has a bonding timber on either side of the opening to Cellar C1. The axial beams, which also have straight chamfers, cross in the centre of the room and the joists are 12×10 cm on 30cm centres. Some reinforcement and repair has occurred fairly recently with some of the joists having been replaced in the northwest corner and a buttress built of Fletton brick now supports the southern end of the binding beam. There is a runnel in the brick floor that empties into a drain in the northwest corner of the room. There is a chimney stack in the west wall and a blocked up window in the south wall.

3.8 *Ground Floor* (Fig. 15)

Room G1 (Plates 16-21)

Size: 9.61×5.14 m, height 2.92m

Location: North range, centre and west

Description: Known as 'The Ballroom', this room has been denuded of its floor, wall coverings (including plaster) and lath and plaster ceiling. The exposed walls reveal part of a timber frame as well as some modern brickwork in the east wall and bonding timbers in the other walls. There is a blocked, 4-light casement window in the north wall and another window under a timber lintel in the west wall.

There are three steps up to the lobby (G6) and the plank and batten lobby door has 5 planks with bead moulding. A number of modern RSJs help to support the ceiling. There is, however, a chamfered beam with no stops at the west end of the room

Room G2 (Plates 22-6)

Size: 4.89×4.54 m, height 3.93m (max. dimensions)

Location: South range, east end

Description: This is the kitchen, which lies in the single storey extension at the eastern end of the building. The walls are mainly painted, although there is some tiling along the south and east walls. There is a modern 4 over 8 light sash window in the south wall and a 4-light window with two opening casements in the north wall. The door into the kitchen is located in the northwest corner, beside the fireplace that now houses a cooker. The door itself is now missing. There is a recess in the alcove above the door opening and another to the south of the fireplace. Modern kitchen units have been installed along the south, east and west walls. There are carpet tiles over the original York stone floor. The roof truss is partially exposed and there are two raking struts to the west of it.

Room G3 (Plates 27-31)

Size: 5.99×4.91 m, height 2.67m

Location: South range, east of G4

Description: This reception room has a door opening in the north wall to the lobby (G6), another in the east wall to the kitchen (G2), and two in the west wall; one to the hall (G4) and the other to the cellar (C1). Only the cellar door opening has retained its door, which is a Victorian design of 4 panels. The window in the south wall consists of two 4 over 4 sash windows flanking a 6 over 6 light sash set within a full height recess.

The ceiling has a chamfered bridging beam with Lamb's Tongue Chamfer Stops at the west end. The floor has carpet tiles over a timber floor made up of modern timbers orientated east-west. The walls are painted with torus moulded skirting boards. The ceiling is also painted.

An inglenook fireplace is situated at the east end of the room. It has a wooden lintel with 4cm wide straight chamfers, arched recesses in the rear brick wall, a circular opening for a flue and York stone and brick hearth.

Room G4 (Plates 32-34)

Size: 2.91×2.30 m, height 2.71m

Location: Centre of south range

Description: Hall, with a door opening in the east wall to Room G3, another in the west wall to Room G5 and the front door in the south wall. The door to Room G5 has 6 raised and fielded panels in the Georgian style with large L-hinges. The L-hinges for the door to Room G3 are still in place although the door has been removed. The front door has a semi-circular fanlight with petal motif over. The door itself has been removed and the opening blocked.

The walls and ceiling are painted, the floorboards, which run east-west, are 23.5-24cm wide, with the occasional 19cm wide board.

The dogleg, open string staircase has 7 risers to a half landing, two to the next half landing and 8 risers to the top. Although the handrail and balusters had been removed prior to this survey, it was clear that there were two balusters to each tread and fluted newel posts. The handrail, which is still evidence in section on the landing, is of the toad-back variety. Each tread has an end panel decorated with a floral design. The pendants are simple, with raised circles.

Room G5 (Plates 35-40)

Size: 4.86×4.86 m, height 2.69m

Location: South range, west of G4

Description: Living room. This has a similar window to that in Room G3, but the recess in which it is situated does not extend as far as the floor. The walls and ceiling are painted white and the floorboards run east to west. There is a modern, brick built fireplace in the west wall with concrete surround that has been broken off. The door in the east wall has 6 panels and large L hinges. The bridging beam has straight chamfers and Lamb's Tongue Chamfer Stops at the west end.

Room G6 (Plates 41-42)

Size: 4.88×2.51 m, height not measured

Location: North range, east end.

Description: Rear entrance lobby and passage, accessed by a door in the east wall and with a door in the west wall to the ballroom (G1), the south wall to Room G3 and in the north wall to the outbuilding. There is a window to the north of the back door and another in the west wall that divides the lobby from the WC (G7).

Room G7

Size: 2.76×1.25 m, height not measuredLocation:North range, east end.Description:WC with a door and window in the south wall.

3.9 *First Floor* (Fig. 16)

Room F1 (Plates 35, 43-46) Size: 5.11×3.42 m, height 2.47m

Location: South range, centre.

Description: Stairwell and landing with painted walls and ceiling, torus moulded skirting boards and a timber floor orientated east-west. The landing is in the form of a rectangular gallery with the stairwell in the centre. There is a 6 over 6 light sash window in the south wall and two arches flanking a 6-panelled door in the north wall. The arches have key blocks and imposts, but have little by way of moulding. This is in contrast to the doors in the east and west walls which have heavily moulded architraves. There is a noticeable slope to the floor.

Room F2 (Plates 47-48)

Size: 5.03×4.87 m, height 2.59m

Location: South range, west of F1.

Description: This bedroom has a modern, double glazed Venetian window in the south wall with a 2 over 4 light sash on either side of the central light, which

comprises a 3 over 6 light sash beneath the arch. The door opening in the east wall has a half butterfly hinge. There is a bridging beam with no chamfer stops and no fireplace. The walls, floor and ceiling are similar to those in the landing.

Room F3 (Plates 49-52)

Size: 5.02×4.10 m, height 2.61m

Location: South range, east of F1.

Description: This bedroom has two cupboards in the east wall on either side of the chimney breast, which has now been plastered over. The cupboard doors are modern, but that into the room is an original 6-panelled door with L hinges. The bridging beam has mortices on either side and a runout stop in the southeast end. The walls and ceiling have been replastered, but an exposed section of original stud walling shows evidence for the original lath and plaster. There is also an exposed timber at the top of the west wall. There is a similar window in the south wall to that in Room F2, and the walls and ceiling are also painted white and the floorboards run east-west. There is an opening in the north wall to a modern bathroom (F4).

Room F4

Size: 2.43×2.57 m, height 2.32m

Location: North range, south-east corner.

Description: Bathroom (en suite to F3). This has a modern 2-light casement window in the east wall.

Room F5 (Plates 53-54)

Size: 5.01×3.94 m, height 2.36m

Location: North range, central.

Description: This bedroom has a 3-light casement window in the north wall, a 4-panel door with in the south wall. The walls and ceiling are plastered and painted and the timber floor runs east-west.

Room F6 (Plates 55)

Size: 3.63×1.03 m, height 2.28m

Location: North range: links F4, F5, F7 & F8

Description: This corridor has a 6-panlled in the north wall to a cupboard and another in the east wall to Room F7. The walls, ceiling and floor are as above and there is a hatch to the roof space in the ceiling.

Room F7 (Plates 56)

Size: 2.55×2.42 m, height 2.27m

Location: North range, north-east corner.

Description: This bathroom has a modern suite, splashback tiling, a wooden floor and a 2-light casement window in the east wall.

Room F8 (Plates 57-59)

Size: 4.98 × 3.09m, height 2.40m

Location: North range, west end.

Description: This bedroom has a 2-light, double-glazed casement window in the north and west walls, a 4-panelled door with L hinges in the east wall and a timber

floor that slopes so dramatically to the north that the top of the door has been spliced to allow for it.

3.10 Attic (Fig. 17)

Room S1 (Plates 60-62)

Size: 4.58×3.32 m, height 1.96m (max)

Location: South range: east attic room

Description: The walls and ceiling have been plastered and painted, torus moulded skirting installed and there is chipboard over the timber floor. The dormer window in the south wall has been blocked. The door opening in the west wall has a step down to the next room (S2). The most interesting feature of the attic rooms is the woodwork. The door opening is in a wall created within one of the trusses, the rafters of which are still exposed. The purlin on the south is a continuous trenched purlin, but the purlins on the north wall are offset.

Room S2 (Plates 63-65)

Size: 3.53×3.37 m, height 2.18m

Location: South range: central attic room

Description: This room has a winding timber staircase in the north wall but no window. The staircase has 11 timber risers and the topmost tread, which is partially formed from the wall plate has an exposed counter bladed scarf joint. There is an opening in the east and west wall to the adjoining rooms. The timber floor runs north-south and the boards are approximately 28cm wide. The walls and ceiling are plastered and painted and there is a platform along the south wall. The end of the northern purlins from S1 and S3 are exposed, as is a section of roof timber in the north corner and another running north-south along the western return wall for the staircase.

Room S3 (Plates 67-70)

Size: 4.82×3.31 m, height 2.06m

Location: South range: west attic room

Description: This is the mirror image of Room S1 and has an additional opening in the north wall to the roofspace. The end of the northern purlin in S2 is exposed in the east wall.

3.11 *Roof* (Plates 71-72)

The roof in the south range is hipped with a single trenched purlin to the south and offset purlins to the north.

The roofs in the north range have a single purlin to either side, wind braces and have been heavily restored.



Plate 1: South elevation



Plate 2: West elevation, north range



Plate 3: North & west elevation, south range



Plate 4: East elevation, north range



Plate 5: East elevation, south range

Plate 6: North elevation



Plate 7: Cellar C1: north wall

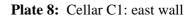




Plate 9: Cellar C1: west wall



Plate 10: Cellar C1: ceiling looking north



Plate 11: Cellar C2: south wall



Plate 12: Cellar C2: west wall



Plate 13: Cellar C2: east wall





Plate 15: Cellar C2: ceiling looking northeast



Plate 16: Room G1: northeast corner



Plate 17: Room G1: northwest corner

Plate 18: Room G1: west wall



Plate 19: Room G1: east wall

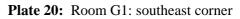




Plate 21: Room G1: southwest corner

Plate 22: Room G2: west wall

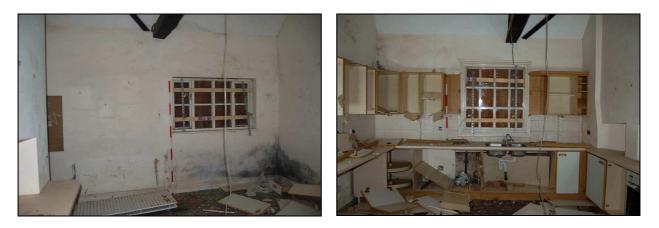


Plate 23: Room G2: north wall

Plate 24: Room G2: south wall



Plate 25: Room G2: east wall





Plate 27: Room G3: east wall

Plate 28: Room G3: north wall



Plate 29: Room G3: west wall

Plate 30: Room G3: south wall



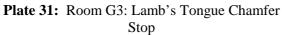




Plate 33: Room G4: staircase



Plate 32: Room G4: door



Plate 34: Room G4: newel post



Plate 35: Hand rail section (F1)



Plate 36: Room G5: east wall



Plate 37: Room G5: north wall



Plate 38: Room G5: west wall



Plate 39: Room G5: south wall

Plate 41: Room G6: looking north



Plate 40: Room G5: door with L hinges



Plate 42: Room G6: looking south



Plate 43: Room F1: north wall

Plate 44: Room F1: west wall



Plate 45: Room F1: south wall

Plate 46: Room F1: east wall



Plate 47: Room F2: south wall

Plate 48: Room F2: half butterfly hinge



Plate 49: Room F3: east wall

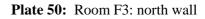




Plate 51: Room F3: west wall

Plate 52: Room F3: south wall



Plate 53: Room F5: north wall

Plate 54: Room F5: south wall

Shenley Dens Farmhouse, Calverton Road, Whaddon, Milton Keynes992/SDF



Plate 55: Room F6: looking north



Plate 56: Room F7: east wall



Plate 57: Room F8: northwest corner



Plate 58: Room F8: north wall



Plate 59: Room F8: 4-panel door with L hinges



Plate 60: Room S1: southwest corner



Plate 61: Room S1: east wall

Plate 62: Room S1: west wall



Plate 63: Room S2: west wall

Plate 64: Room S2: south wall



Plate 65: Room S2: east wall



Plate 66: Room S2: stair & scarf joint



Plate 67: Room S3: west wall

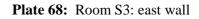




Plate 69: Room S3: northeast corner



Plate 70: Room S3: south wall



Plate 71: Roofspace viewed from Room S1



Plate 72: Roofspace viewed from Room S3



Figure 8: South elevation (*scale 1:100*)



Figure 10: East elevation (scale 1:100)



Figure 11: North elevation (scale 1:100)

Historic Building Assessment



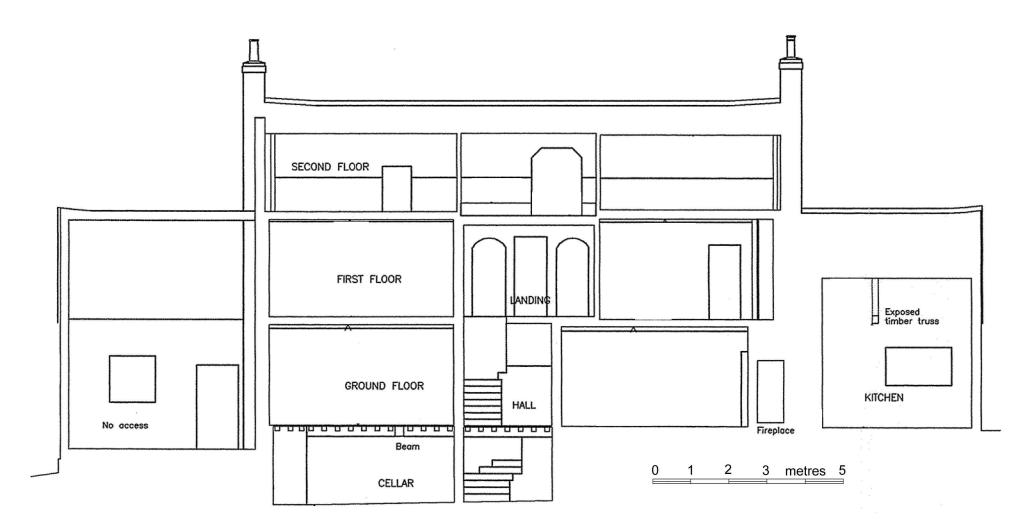
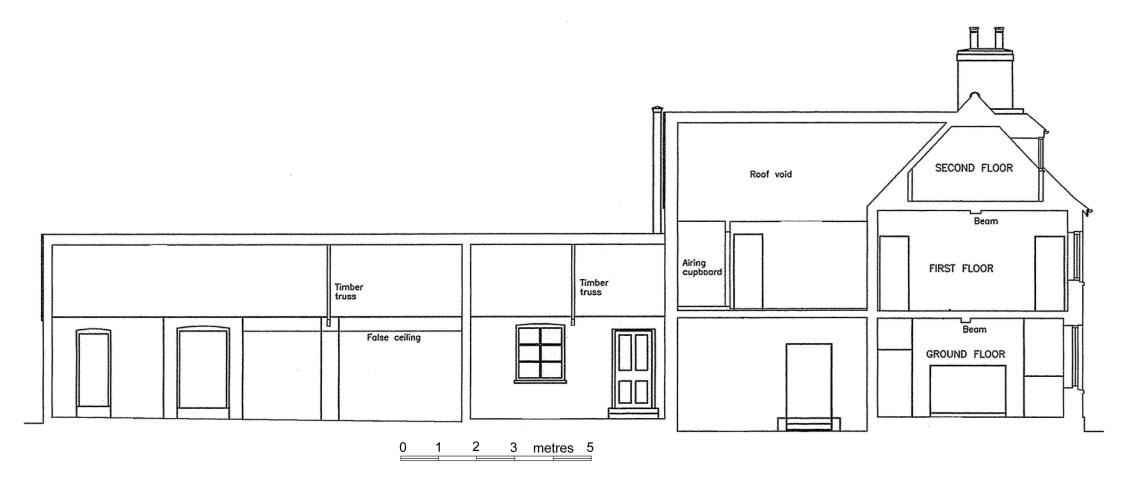
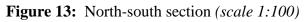
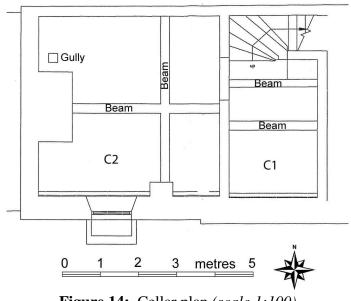
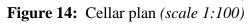


Figure 12: East-west section (scale 1:100)









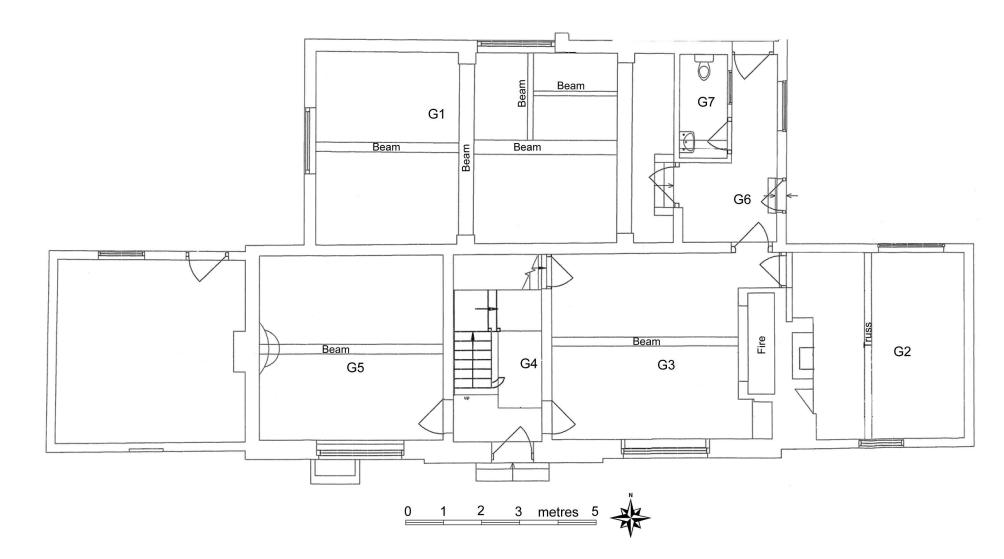


Figure 15: Ground floor plan (*scale 1:100*)

Historic Building Assessment

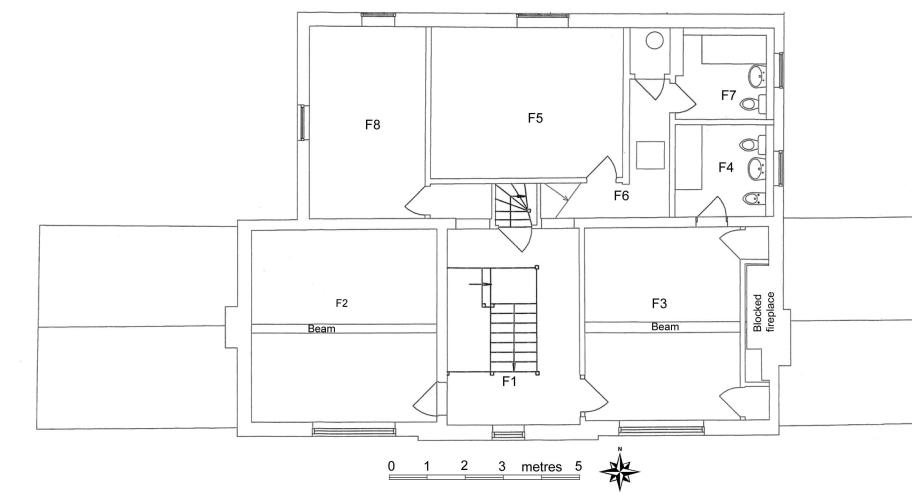


Figure 16: First floor plan (scale 1:100)

Historic Building Assessment



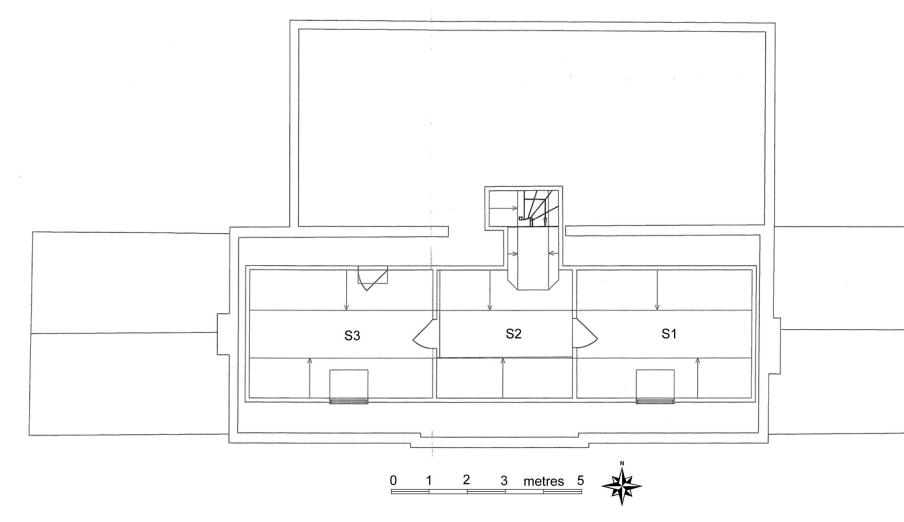


Figure 17: Second floor plan (*scale 1:100*)

Historic Building Assessment



4 Conclusions

- **4.1** Shenley Dens Farmhouse is an interesting amalgam of architectural styles and detail. It is clear from the cartographic evidence that there were a number of buildings here by 1770, although their layout was not that of the present farm. Bryant's map of 1825 shows a series of buildings, which correspond more closely with those on the site now. The evidence from the farmhouse itself suggests that the present building was erected in the late 18th or early 19th century on the site of an earlier structure. This is based on the fact that the brickwork has both diagonal and horizontal skintlings; the pressure marks on the sides of the bricks that were created during the drying process. The earlier diagonal skintlings were generally replaced by horizontal skintlings around the end of the 18th century. In addition, the brickwork in both the cellar and the Ballroom (G1) contain bonding timbers, another feature of the 18th and early 19th century. The stone built cellar appears to be unusual in an otherwise brick built structure and, as such, could well represent the earlier building.
- **4.2** The timberwork in the cellar shows characteristics of early post-medieval buildings, such as the chamfers, the remaining chamfer stops and the size and centring of the joists. This is likely to suggest an early 17th century date for the earlier house, which, on the present evidence, is likely to have been a timber framed structure on stone footings. The house also contains a number of re-used beams with Lamb's Tongue Chamfer Stops, which generally indicate a mid 16th-mid 17th century date.
- **4.3** The other datable features in the house include the staircase, the fireplaces, the doors and their hinges. With the exception of the modern fireplace with its concrete surround in Room G5 and the late 20th century Regency style doors in Room F3 and in the attic, the remaining evidence can provide a range of dates. Doors with 6 panels were known throughout the 18th century and still in use in the early 19th century when the 4-panelled door then became the norm. Similarly L hinges were used into the early 19th century. The front door with its fanlight also falls within this fairly wide timespan, as fanlights remained popular until the 1840s. The two most interesting features in the building are the inglenook fireplace in Room G3 and the main staircase.
- **4.4** The inglenook fireplace appears to be rather out of place in this building and begs the question of whether it is a later fabrication. However, the floor plans show the fireplace in Room F3 to be a similar size to the inglenook, which makes this unlikely. This could suggest that Room G3 functioned as a kitchen and G2 possibly as a dairy, which was a rather anachronistic use of space but not wholly unacceptable.
- **4.5** The staircase, which is said to have been imported from Whaddon Hall when it was rebuilt in the 1820s (EH listing 2004), opens into a galleried landing on the first floor with two arches flanking a doorway in the north wall creating an architectural focal point that is lit by the window in the south wall. The present state of the staircase clearly shows that it had two balusters on every tread, that the newel posts were fluted, the handrail was toad backed and that the end panels to the treads were decorated with floral motifs. However, the remaining evidence does not overwhelmingly indicate an early 18th century date for the staircase: various architectural details surviving here were also echoed in 19th century staircases. At its best the staircase gallery would

undoubtedly have provided a dramatic architectural feature, but to suggest that it was grand is perhaps a little overstated.

- **4.6** The only datable features not yet discussed are the windows. Although they are modern replacements, the openings for the Venetian windows have been considered to be integral to the original build. This may well be so, although the present state of the building made this difficult to determine during the present survey. Windows of this type were also popular from the mid 18th until the early 19th century, and so to suggest that they are indicative of closer date range would be misleading.
- **4.7** The building is suffering from severe subsidence and has lost many historical features through over restoration in the late 20th century and recent vandalism. What remains provides an interesting narrative of an otherwise uninspiring building, from the early 17th century timberwork in the cellar to the modern refurbishment of the attics. A number of mysteries remain, despite the visit made by English Heritage in September 2004 and the present survey, the first of which is the clumsy adjunct of the rear range with the south range. The south range portrays the common symmetry associated with 18th /early 19th century architecture and the three bays making up the north range provide some symmetry in that they are all of similar size, but there is little correlation between the two. The external mismatch between the two parts may, of course, have been due to the terrain and the possibility of structural failure that has nonetheless manifested itself in the northwest corner. The internal misalignment is remains unclear.
- **4.8** The original purpose of the building also remains undecided. The initial listing of 2004 suggested that it was a hunting lodge. Following the English Heritage visit the following October it was proposed that it was a Dower House for Whaddon Hall and states that this explains the use of Venetian windows and a grand staircase in Shenley Dens Farmhouse. The historical record would suggest that neither of these is likely, as Shenley Dens was not part of the Whaddon Hall estate. Similarly the suggestion that the staircase may have come from Whaddon Hall when it was being rebuilt in 1820 is unsubstantiated.
- **4.9** The hypothesis that Shenley Dens Farmhouse was built as a focal point at the end of an avenue of trees from Whaddon Hall has subsequently been refuted by English Heritage inspectors. There is certainly no evidence to support this hypothesis in the cartographic record, but neither is there any evidence to support the subsequent theory that the farmhouse was *intended to be seen from the main house* (EH 2007). That the house is visible from Whaddon Hall may not have been a consideration to the builders, and it has already been argued that it is very highly unlikely that Whaddon Hall was the *main house* for Shenley Dens Farmhouse.
- **4.10** In summary, Shenley Dens Farmhouse appears to have been built around 1800 on the site of an earlier building, probably represented by the cellar. The timberwork in the cellar and elsewhere in the house date from the early 17th century, and may have been part of the earlier building, which is likely to have been timber built on limestone footings. It is therefore clear that building material was re-used in this structure, but there is no historical evidence to substantiate the claim that this came from Whaddon Hall, or that the farmhouse had been part of the Whaddon Hall estate at the time. The

anachronistic use of the inglenook fireplace and the rather robust L-hinges provide an element of charm in a building that has otherwise lost a considerable amount of its architectural integrity in the last decade or so.

5 Acknowledgements

The building assessment was commissioned on behalf of Persimmon Homes by Bidwells. The writers would like to thank Frances Beeton and Matthew Pocock of Bidwells for their assistance. Thanks are also due to the staff of Milton Keynes Library for their help.

The survey was led for ASC by Karin Semmelmann MA AIFA, who also undertook the historical research. The project was managed by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA, who along with Calli Rouse BA PIFA assisted with the survey. The report was edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

6 Archive

- 6.1 The project archive will comprise:
 - 1. Brief
 - 2. Project Design
 - 3. Report
 - 4. Historical & Survey notes
 - 5. Architect's survey drawings
 - 6. List of photographs
 - 7. B/W prints
 - 8. B/W negatives
 - 9. CDROM with copies of all digital files.
- 6.2 The archive will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum. An accession number has been requested.

7 References

Standards & Specifications

- EH 2006 Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice. English Heritage (London).
- IFA 2000a Institute of Field Archaeologists' Code of Conduct.
- IFA 2000b Institute of Field Archaeologists' Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology.
- IFA 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standards & Guidance* documents (*Desk-Based Assessments, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings*).

Books and Historical Sources:

- Croft, R.A. and Mynard, D.C., 1993 *The changing landscape of Milton Keynes*. Buckinghamshire Archaeol. Soc. Monog. Ser. **5** (Aylesbury).
- Ivens R.J. 1993 'The Shenleys' in Croft & Mynard, 131-143.
- Lowndes, Rev C, 1863 'On the Manor and Chase of Whaddon, with its "Finds"', *Recs Buckinghamshire* **2**, 120-126.
- Radcliff O 1900 History and Antiquities of the Newport Pagnell Hundreds. Cowper Press (Olney).
- VCH 1927 The Victoria History of the County of Buckingham, vol. 4 (London).

Maps

- 1599 Salden Estate Map (Bucks Record Soc. 236)
- 1770 Thomas Bryant's map of the County of Buckingham (Bucks Archaeol. Soc. 2000)
- 1771 Map of the estates of Rev. Primatt Knapp
- 1825 A. Bryant's map of the County of Buckingham (Bucks Archaeol. Soc. 2000)
- 1885 Ordnance Survey 1st Edition 6" sheet XIV.
- 1925 Ordnance Survey 25" sheet XIV.7
- 1998 Ordnance Survey Explorer 1:25,000 map, Sheet 192
- 2007 Ordnance Survey 1:1250 Sitemap

Appendix 1: Method Statement

Aims

- To compile a basic record of the structure(s) concerned, prior to refurbishment, conversion or demolition
- To ascertain the structural history and development of the building, within its local context
- To provide sufficient information on the historic and architectural significance of the building to inform proposals relating to its refurbishment / conversion / development.

Standards

The work will conform to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance Notes* (2001) and *Code of Conduct* (2000), to current English Heritage guidelines (EH 1991), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

Methods

- A programme of historical research, using all readily available sources (eg. Sites & Monuments Record, County Record Office, local libraries, planning records)
- A survey of the building, normally to EH Level 1 or 2 (details attached).
- Preparation of an assessment report, based on the results of the above.

Historic building assessment involves a combination of historical research, written description, measured survey and photography. It may lead to a requirement for more detailed survey and analysis prior to refurbishment, conversion or demolition. As such, it is essential that unrestricted access to the structure being recorded is given to the surveyors, subject to current health and safety requirements and site security.

Historical Research

Background historical research will follow current IFA standards and guidelines for deskbased assessment (IFA 2001). All sources consulted will be listed in the final report.

Written Description

The written description will be prepared from detailed notes and sketches taken on site, augmented by a study of the drawings and photographs, where appropriate. Depending on the nature of the building, the written description will be presented in a logical and consistent format (e.g. overall structure: external details, roof and walls: internal layout: internal description by room), supported by relevant drawings and photographs.

Measured Survey

Measured surveys will normally be carried out using tapes or LDM (laser distance measurement) for vertical and horizontal measurement throughout. A surveyor's level or Total Station EDM may be used to establish floor levels. Where appropriate, reference may be made to available architects' or engineers' drawings, either on paper or in an appropriate CAD format. Plastic film will be used for all field drawings. Scales used will be appropriate to the size and complexity of the structures or features being recorded: generally 1:50 or 1:100 for floor plans, 1:20 or 1:50 for elevations and sections, and 1:20 or 1:10 for architectural details, plant and machinery, etc.

Photographic Survey

The primary photographic record will normally be compiled in 35mm black & white print format, supplemented by digital photography. A photographic register will be maintained on ASC's *Photographic Record Sheet*, fully cross-referenced. Digital photographs may be used to illustrate the report. Metric scales will be used in photographs where appropriate. Photography will employ natural light wherever possible, but artificial light, flash or floodlighting will be used where necessary.

Reporting

Upon completion of the survey and research stages the assessment report will be prepared, based on the results obtained by the work described above. This will typically include:

- a concise non-technical summary of the results
- information relating to the circumstances of the project
- a summary of the aims of the project and the methods used
- background information about the site, including any desk-based studies
- a description of the results, supported by appropriate illustrative material
- a conclusion, summarising the results and examining their significance
- appendices (copies of record sheets, reference works etc.)
- an SMR summary sheet, if required

Copies of the report will be provided as required to the Client, the Planning Archaeologist, the National Monuments Record, the Local Planning Authority, and any other bodies designated by the Planning Archaeologist or client. Eight copies are normally produced: a charge is indicated for providing additional copies.

In accordance with ASC's normal reporting procedures, interim reports on any significant discoveries made during the project will be submitted to the relevant period journals (e.g. *Britannia, Medieval Archaeology*) and to any relevant regional journals (e.g. *CBA Mid-Anglia Bulletin, South Midlands Archaeology*) within one year of the project's completion.

Once the final report has been accepted by the Planning Archaeologist, an OASIS fieldwork summary form will be completed and submitted to the Archaeology Data Service.

Archiving

All archaeological projects generate a quantity of records and related material (paper, photographic and electronic records, etc). Together, these constitute the *project archive*. While the report may describe the project's findings in some detail, the archive contains the evidence on which the report is based, and its importance cannot be too highly stressed. By their nature, building surveys cannot always be repeated, so the archive often constitutes the only surviving evidence of the building prior to conversion, etc, and arrangements must therefore be made for its deposition and long-term storage.

On completion of the reporting stages of the project, the archive will be prepared for longterm storage, to an appropriate standard and in a format agreed in advance with the relevant local depository. This will be in accordance with guidelines prepared by the UK Institute of Conservation (Walker 1990) and the Museums & Galleries Commission (MGC 1992). Unless otherwise instructed, ASC will make arrangements to deposit the archive with the relevant local museum, Record Office or library. Provision has been indicated in the project estimates for the likely costs of deposition.

Staffing

The project will be managed by **Bob Zeepvat** BA MIFA, an established archaeologist with extensive experience in managing archaeological projects, and of work on a wide range of historic buildings and structures. He holds a first degree from the University of Leicester, and has been a validated Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists since 1986. He has been involved in the management of archaeological projects since the late 1970s, formerly as Senior Field Archaeologist for the *Milton Keynes Archaeology Unit*, and as Project Manager for the *Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust*.

Other staff assigned to the project will normally have appropriate experience of historic building recording and research. Any staff undergoing training on the project will be fully supervised by experienced staff.

References

EH 1991 Management of Archaeological Projects (2nd edition). English Heritage (London).

- EH 2006 Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice. English Heritage (London).
- IFA 2000 Institute of Field Archaeologists' Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology.
- IFA 2001a Institute of Field Archaeologists' Standard & Guidance for the Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings.
- IFA 2001b Institute of Field Archaeologists' Standard & Guidance for Desk-Based Assessments.

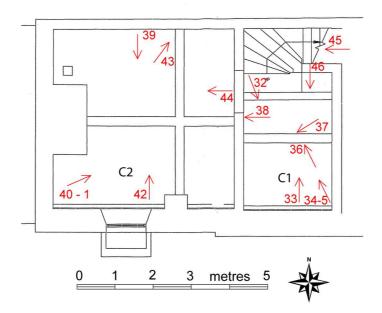


Figure 18: Cellar photo plan (scale as shown)

4



↑1

Figure 19: Ground floor photo plan (not to scale)

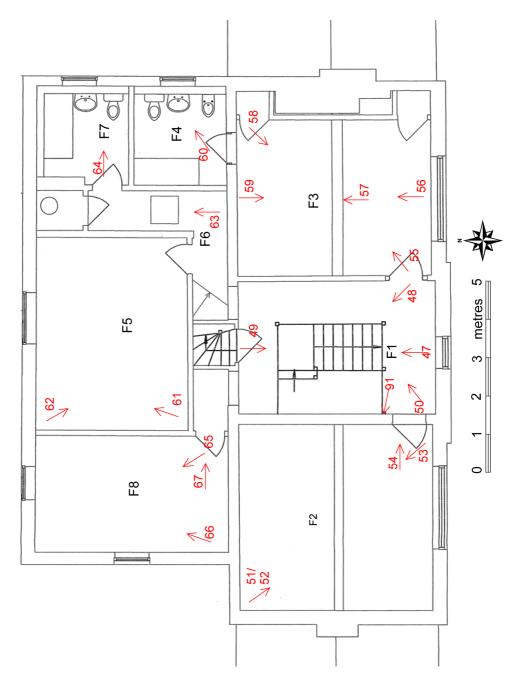


Figure 20: First floor photo plan (scale as shown)

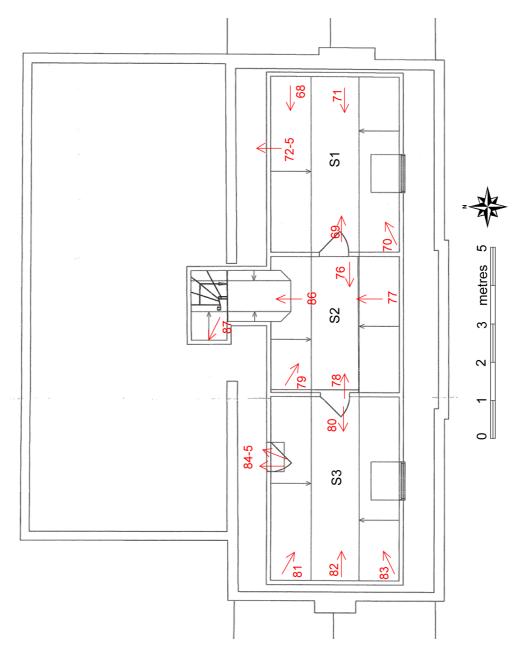


Figure 21: Second floor photo plan (scale as shown)

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Shenley Dens Farmhouse							
Shot No.	View	Subject					
1	Ν	South elevation					
2	W	East elevation					
3	SW	East and north elevations					
4	SW	General view of farmhouse and yard					
5	NE	G1, north-east corner					
6	NW	G1, north-west corner					
7	W	G1, west elevation					
8	SW	G1, south-west corner					
9	NE	G1, ceiling detail					
10	SE	G1, south-east corner					
11	Е	G1, east elevation					
12	Е	G2, east elevation					
13	Ν	G2, north elevation					
14	W	G2, west elevation					
15	SW	G2, exposed truss					
16	S	G2, south elevation					
17	Е	G3, fireplace and east elevation					
18	Ν	G3, north elevation					
19	W	G3, west elevation					
20	S	G3, south elevation					
21	-	G3, chamfer stops on ceiling beam, west end					
22	Ν	G4, staircase					
23	Ν	G4, newel post					
24	S	G4, interior of front doorway					
25	Е	G5, east elevation					
26	SE	G5, detail of door					
27	Ν	G5, north elevation					
28	W	G5, fireplace and west elevation					
29	S	G5, south elevation					
30	-	G5, chamfer stops on ceiling beam, west end					
31	W	G5, detail of fireplace					
32	Е	C1, east elevation					
33	Ν	C1, north elevation and stairs					
34	NW	C1, west elevation and doorway to C2					
35	Ν	C1, ceiling					
36	N	C1, detail of ceiling construction					
37	S	C1, detail of ceiling construction					
38	W	C1, detail of ceiling construction					
39	S	C2, south elevation					
40	E	C2, east elevation					
41	NE	C2, ceiling					
42	N	C2, north elevation					
43	E	C2, detail of principal N-S ceiling joist					
44	W	C2, west elevation					
45	W	C1, cellar stairs from above					
46	SW	C1, storage space below main staircase					
47	Ν	F1, north elevation					

48	NW	F1, west elevation		
49	S	F1, south elevation		
50	NE	F1, east elevation		
51	S	F2, south elevation		
52	S	F2, ceiling		
53	NW	F2, north-west corner		
54	SE	F2, half butterfly hinge		
55	E	F3, east elevation		
56	N	F3, north elevation		
57	NE	F3, ceiling		
58	W	F3, west elevation		
59	S	F3, south elevation		
60	NE	F4, window		
61	NE	F5, north elevation		
62	SE	F5, south elevation		
63	N	F6, north-south corridor		
64	E	F7, east elevation		
65	NW	F8, north-west corner		
66 67	N SE	F8, north elevation F8, detail of door		
68	SE SW	S1, south-west corner and south purlin		
69	E	S1, souri-west comer and souri punin		
70	NE	S1, east elevation S1, north-east corner		
71	W	S1, west elevation		
72	N	North range, east bay, roof timbers		
73	N	North range, east bay, roof timbers		
74	NW	North range, east bay, roof timbers		
75	NE	North range, east bay, purlin support		
76	W	S2, west elevation		
77	N	S2, top of attic stairwell		
78	E	S2, east elevation		
79	SE	S2, south-east corner		
80	W	S3, west elevation		
81	SE	S3, south elevation and south-east corner		
82	E	S3, east elevation		
83	NE	S3, north-east corner and door to roof space		
84	N	North range, west bay, roof timbers		
85	NW	North range, west bay, purlin support		
86	N	S2, attic stairs & counterbladed scarf joint in wall plate		
87	NW	Exposed timber in attic stairwell		
88	S	North elevation, west part		
89	SE	South range, detail of north-west corner		
90 91	S W	South range, north elevation of outbuilding at west end		
91	N N	F1, detail of profile of banister rail in west wall G6, north-south passage to outbuilding		
92	S	G6, rear entrance foyer		
33	3			

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS							
Project Name:	Shenley Dens Farmhouse						
Short Description:	In October 2007 an historic building assessment was carried out for the farmhouse at Shenley Dens Farm, Shenley Church End, Milton Keynes, to inform proposals for the future of the building, particularly in relation to its relatively recent Grade II listing.						
	Shenley Dens Farmhouse is a two -storey brick building with cellar and attics, under a series of tiled roofs. It lies in the southwest corner of the rectangular farmyard, which is bounded by a series of single-storey buildings on the other three sides. Shenley Dens Farmhouse appears to have been constructed in the late 18 th /early 19 th century on the site of an earlier building, probably represented by the stone cellar. The timberwork in the cellar and elsewhere in the house dates from the early 17 th century, and may have been part of this earlier building, which is likely to have been timber built on limestone footings. The listing description reports that that the staircase, once the most prominent feature in the house, lay have came from Whaddon Hall, which had been rebuilt by Browne Willis in the early 18 th century. It also proposed that the farmhouse had been built as a hunting lodge or Dower House for Whaddon Hall and was constructed as a visual focal point to be seen from the hall. The present authors have found no evidence to support the proposed link between the two properties and propose that the development of Shenley Dens Farmhouse was completely independent of Whaddon Hall. Shenley Dens Farmhouse was heavily restored in the late 20 th century culminating in the loss of the lath and plaster walls and ceilings, the original windows and much of the original roofs. Further losses have occurred through recent vandalism, the ballroom has been denuded of all its internal components and structural distress is clearly evident in the western part of the building.						
Project Type:	Building assessment						
Site status:	Listed GII	Previous work:	none				
Current land use:	Disused farm house & buildings	Future work: (yes / no / unknown)	unknown				
Monument type:	Farm house	Monument period:	19 th century				
Significant finds:	none						
	PROJECT	LOCATION					
County:	Buckinghamshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	SP 8083 3638				
District:	Milton Keynes	Parish:	Shenley Church End CP				
Site address:		Road, Whaddon, Milton Keyne	1				
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	215 sq. m.	Height OD: (metres)	107				
	PROJECT	CREATORS					
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Con	sultancy Ltd					
Project brief originator:	-	Project design originator:	ASC Ltd				
Project Manager:	Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA	Director/Supervisor:	Karin Semmelman MA AIFA				
Sponsor / funding body:	Persimmon Homes						
	PROJE	CT DATE					
Start date:	27/09/2007	End date:	28/09/2007				
PROJECT ARCHIVES							
Location (Accession no.) Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)							

Physical:	N/a	N/a				
Paper:	Bucks County Museum	Archive box file				
Digital:	Bucks County Museum	CD in above				
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)						
Title:	Historic Building Assessment: Shenley Dens Farmhouse, Calverton Road, Whaddon, Milton Keynes					
Serial title & volume:	ASC 992/SDF/1					
Author(s):	Karin Semmelmann MA AIFA					
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